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Beyond the Name, the Dream, and the Door: Asceticism of the Heart in Jātaka 73–84
Daily ethics, Jungian shadow and apophatic path in Buddhist tales of rebirth and wisdom

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The image created manages to condense into a single symbolic architecture the path that the essay "Beyond the name, the dream and the door: asceticism of the heart in Jātaka 73–84" proposes: an itinerary that starts from the concrete ethics of everyday life, crosses the confrontation with the shadow and culminates in an ineffable threshold that recalls both Buddhism and the apophatic perspective.

An ascending structure in three worlds

The composition is organized like an inner mountain.

From the bottom to the top you pass:

1. by community and ethical action;

2. from the ambiguous realm of the shadow and the double;

3. from the region of mystery and non-name.

The viewer's eye is naturally guided towards the central luminous door, which becomes the gravitational pole of the entire image.

First level: ethics as the root of awakening

In the lower part the bright forest dominates.

The intertwined roots evoke Jātaka 74 and suggest a fundamental truth of ancient Buddhism: no existence is isolated. Everything starts in the network of relationships.

Conceptual illustration on the development and interconnectedness of life in the universe

The sleeping caravan in the center represents the vulnerability of the human community.

Around it: the snake, the mouse, the parrot, are not predators but guardians.

The image thus transforms the animals of the stories into archetypes of spontaneous virtues: vigilance, adaptability and memory.

On the right, the fish leaping from the arid land towards the rain is perhaps one of the most powerful symbols of the entire cover.

It represents:

resilience;

the belief in the improbable;

the ability of life to be reborn when all seems lost.

In the context of the essay, this fish is the metaphor of consciousness that chooses transformation rather than despair.

The intertwined hands in the foreground complete the message: the spiritual path begins as an ethical practice, not as a mystical experience.

Second level: the encounter with the shadow

The middle section introduces a strong psychological tension. Here the language changes. The dawn of the lower level gives way to amber and indigo tones.

The Cracked Mirror

The mirror is the dominant symbol. In the reflection appears the double of the miser. He is not an enemy. It is the possible version of oneself.

This insight is profoundly Jungian: the shadow is not simply what we repress, but also what we could become.

The broken mirror suggests that ordinary identity is fragmentary and that spiritual conversion passes through its crack.

The dwarf and the giant

Next to the mirror we find the little man facing the ruined giant. The opposition is immediate:

weakness versus strength;

interiority versus power;

consciousness against ego inflation.

The collapsing giant almost seems like a representation of the ego built on the illusions of possession and control.

Its dissolution anticipates the central theme of Jātaka 83: man does not coincide with the name he bears.

The broken cup

A dark substance flows from the broken vase that generates human figures similar to ascetics or ghosts.

This part is particularly interesting. It can be read as the materialization of unconscious contents:

repressed desires;

fears;

deformed spiritual images.

The black that comes out of the cup is not only bad. It is raw material to be transformed. In Jungian terms, it represents the nigredo, the dark phase of individuation.

The island of the ogre

On the right appears an almost dreamlike scene: a suspended man clinging to the leg of a monstrous figure. The floating island recalls the seductive character of illusions. The attachment is visible in the posture of the character itself. He is not walking. He is holding back.

The image masterfully visualizes one of the central themes of the Jātaka: suffering arises from what we cannot let go.

Third level: beyond the name

The upper part constitutes the theological and philosophical summit of the composition. Here the figurative language becomes apophatic. Forms dissolve. Light prevails over objects.

The faceless figure

In the center appears a being without features. The lack of a face is essential. It does not indicate the absence of identity. It indicates the transcendence of identity. The figure is removing a name tag. A luminous heart appears under the name. This is probably the most important symbol of the entire cover. It summarizes the message of the essay:

the human being is not the role he plays,

it is not the reputation he possesses,

it is not the concept he formulates about himself.

The heart represents the living reality that precedes any definition.

The Door of Light

Behind the figure opens the large golden door. What is striking is that the door does not lead to a landscape.

There is no paradise.

There is no heavenly city.

There is no describable reward.

There is only light.

From an apophatic perspective, this detail is decisive. The ultimate goal is not represented because it cannot be represented. The door is the symbol of the passage from the thinkable to the unthinkable.

From the nameable to the unmentionable.

From the narrated self to the liberated self.

The eye and the sixteen constellations

Above the door appears a large eye surrounded by constellations. The eye can be interpreted in several ways:

awakened awareness;

enlightened mind;

penetrating vision of the Buddha;

symbol of pure attention.

The dream constellations of the sixteen dreams, on the other hand, indicate that even the most enigmatic dreams still belong to the order of images. The eye lies beyond them. As if the message were:

"Don't stop at interpretations; go towards what observes."

Overall reading

The cover can be read as a map of the asceticism of the heart. The symbolic sequence is clear:

Ethics → Shadow → Luminous Void

or:

Community → Individuation → Transcendence

or again:

Name → Dream → Door

From a Jungian point of view, the path leads from the ego to the Self.

From a Buddhist point of view, it leads from attachment to liberation.

From an apophatic point of view, it leads from concept to mystery.

The strength of the image lies precisely in having fused these three registers without confusing them: the moral realism of the Jatakas, the psychological depth of the Jungian shadow and the silence of negative theology converge in the same final figure, the luminous heart that emerges when the name is laid.

In this sense, the door is not the finish line of the journey. It is what appears when there is no one left to be defined.

The essay on Jātaka 73–84 identifies a thematic axis and organizes the stories into three levels of increasing value. The axis towards which they converge is the path from the external appearance (names, roles, visible acts) to the inner reality (heart, shadow, dream) and finally to the apophatic dimension (the paths of spiritual well-being that transcend any definition). The reading is integrated with ideas from everyday life, Jungian psychology and negative theology.

Level I – The ethical foundation: gestures that weave the world

The Jātaka who teach the basics of coexistence: gratitude, union, sacrifice, vigilance. Values embodied in daily action, where the visible good generates harmony. They correspond to the Jungian "person" who adapts to society, but they already contain the germ of a transcendence.

73. Saccaṃkira-jātaka

The ingratitude of a prince and the gratitude of a snake, a mouse and a parrot.

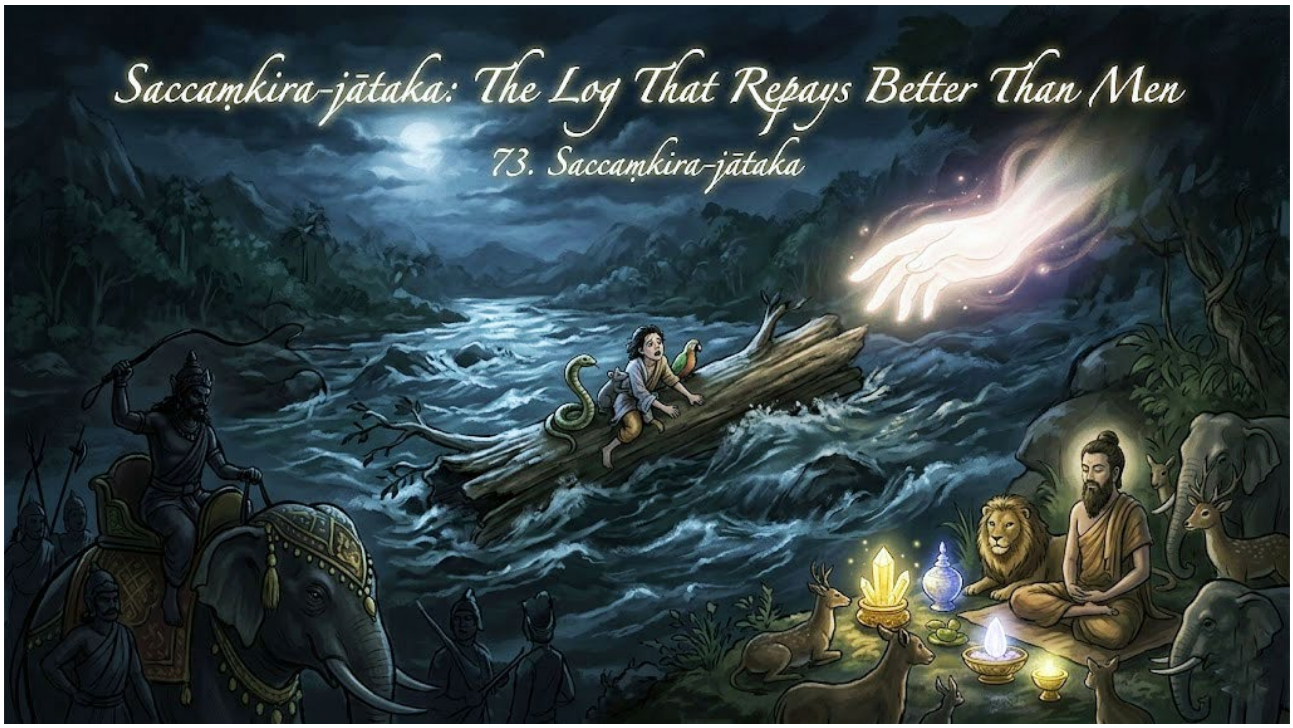
Key scene: Rescued animals return the favor; the human forgets.

Daily life: The memory of the good received as a social glue.

Jung: The archetype of the gift is the betrayal of the shadow when the ego swells.

Synopsis of the plot

The king of Benares has a son, the Evil Prince, who is so cruel that he is hated by everyone. One day, while he was bathing in the river, his servants, exasperated, threw him into the water and fled. The prince survives by clinging to a log. A snake, a mouse and a parrot also find refuge on that trunk, all pushed by the current. An ascetic (the Bodhisatta), who lives in a hut on the shore, hears the screams, dives and rescues the trunk with all four of them. He lights a fire, gives food and takes care of the animals first and then the prince. The latter, furious for not having had the right of way, harbors a grudge. Once healed, the three animals promise the ascetic a reward (their hidden treasures); The prince, back in the palace and becoming king, promises the "four requirements", but in his heart he plans to kill the benefactor to cancel the debt of gratitude. The ascetic, in order to test his promises, first goes to the animals, who recognize him with joy and offer him treasures; then he presents himself in the city to the king. As soon as he sees him, the evil king orders him to be arrested, whipped on every street corner and executed. Under the whippings, the ascetic repeats an ancient maxim: "A log repays the rescue better than some men". Those present, having discovered the story, rebel, kill the king and anoint the ascetic as sovereign. The new king rules with justice, goes to take the treasures offered by snake, mouse and parrot, and lives in harmonious friendship with them.



Dramatic Structure

- Main characters:

  - Evil Prince (future king, narcissistic and ungrateful shadow).

  - Bodhisatta (ascetic, later righteous king; ethical conscience and savior).

  - Three animals: Snake, Mouse, Parrot (bearers of instinctual gratitude and archetypal fidelity).

  - Court and People of Benares (collective judicial instance).

- Central conflict:

The conflict is not between man and nature, but between the gift of life (the act of the Bodhisatta) and the betrayal of memory by the Evil Prince. It is an archetypal conflict between Gratitude and Envy of the existence of others (if I owe my life to someone, I carry the weight of an unbearable inferiority).

- Dramatic Turn:

The public scene of the flogging, in which the ascetic does not scream in pain but repeats a sapiential maxim. This absence of vindictive reaction transforms the victim into a witness, forcing bystanders to wonder why that behavior, precipitating the truth.

- Outcome:

Total reversal: the ungrateful is killed by the crowd (death of the external tyrant and, symbolically, of the unredeemed inner shadow); the wise become king (the Self assumes the guidance of the psyche); The treasure (psychic energy, vital resources) is replenished and shared with the faithful instincts (animals).

Explicit teaching

The story openly declares the superiority of gratitude, embodied by "simple" animals, over the ingratitude of a powerful person. The repeated maxim is the manifesto: "A trunk repays the rescue better than some men". The lesson is clear: those who forget the good received break the social pact and lose their humanity, deserving ruin. The visible good generates harmony; the forgotten good generates destruction.

Implicit teaching

The implicit is more subtle and disturbing:

1. The proximity of disaster to the gift: The Bodhisatta saves the whole trunk, without distinction. His future executioner is already included in his compassionate gesture. The asset is not a guaranteed return investment; it is an excess of meaning that includes the risk of betrayal.

2. The resentment of the saved: The prince is angry because he is cared for after the animals. This detail is crucial: ingratitude arises from a primary narcissistic wound. Not having taken precedence makes him feel diminished in being. Gratitude would have been a second wound, the recognition of one's dependence. Killing the benefactor is the ultimate attempt to erase one's vulnerability.

3. The truth not shouted: The ascetic does not protest his innocence, but repeats a proverb. The truth is not imposed by the force of the accusation, but is deposited with the calm of an enigma. It is this void of claim that makes room for the rebellion of the crowd, which acts as an awakened collective conscience.

Relationship with the essay "Beyond the Name, the Dream and the Door"

This Jātaka is the perfect starting point for Level I – The Ethical Foundation. It stages the first brick of coexistence: gratitude as a memory of goodness. In the essay, this is the stage of the Jungian "person" adjusting to society. The story shows what happens when this adaptation collapses: the Evil Prince is a person (social mask of king) who has severed all ties with the soul (the faithful animals, the grateful instincts). His kingdom is the court, the pure exterior.

However, the germ of transcendence is already in the behavior of the Bodhisatta. He does not preach gratitude, he embodies it in the gesture of saving and in silence under the whips. His action is already a microscopic "asceticism of the heart": an action that does not ask for recognition. This is a prelude to the later levels of the essay, where ethics is internalized in an apophatic journey. His maxim is not a lesson, but a custody of the mystery of human freedom, capable of the worst (homicidal ingratitude) and the best (the fidelity of animals).

Compelling anecdotes in a Jungian key

1. The Forgotten Manager and Mentor

A bright young man is hired in a company thanks to the recommendation of an old professor. After years of career, the young man becomes an executive and, during a meeting, publicly humiliates his former mentor,

now an elderly consultant, dismissing his ideas as outdated. Why? In Jungian terms, the old professor is the embodiment of the Shadow of Debt. Every time he sees it, the manager does not see a friend, but the face of his initial inadequacy, a narcissistic humiliation that the Ego, now "swollen" (inflation), cannot tolerate. Thus he tries to symbolically destroy the creditor. The Saccaṃkira-jātaka shows the ultimate fate of this dynamic: the destruction of the ungrateful by the "collective" (the board of directors, colleagues) who recognize the injustice.

The image of the forgotten manager and mentor is a powerful representation of the conflict between the inflated ego and the Shadow of debt.

In Jungian terms, the scene shows the moment when the ego, identified with success and competence, can no longer tolerate the memory of its original dependence.

Symbolic analysis

- The manager embodies the Ego that has lost contact with its human root. His aggressive posture and pointing finger are signs of projection: he attributes to the mentor what he does not want to recognize in himself — fragility, fear of being indebted, initial inadequacy.

- The mentor represents the Shadow of Debt, the part of the psyche that remembers the gift received and the original dependence. It is the archetype of the degraded "wise old man", who becomes a figure of remorse and guilt.

- The board of directors in the background is the "collective" that, in the Saccaṃkira-jātaka, punishes ingratitude: the community that restores moral balance when the ego has isolated itself in its pride.

Psychic dynamics

The manager's gesture is an act of symbolic destruction of the creditor. But, as Jung teaches, what is destroyed on the outside returns on the inside as an autonomous complex: the humiliated shadow takes revenge through loss of meaning, crisis or fall.

The mentor, humiliated, becomes the bearer of the Self: the truth that the Ego cannot bear.

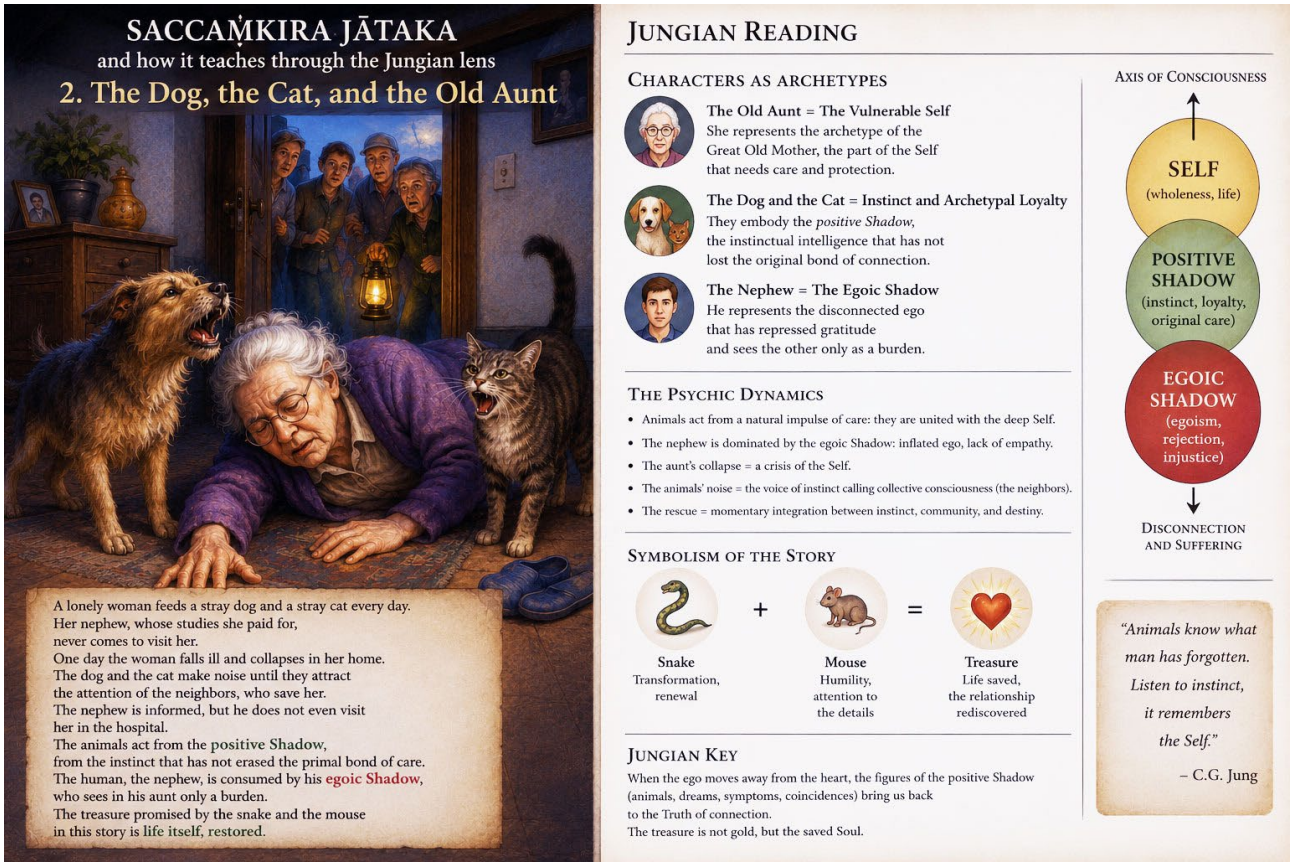
Archetypal meaning

The scene is a drama of separation: the young man who denies his spiritual father. It is the myth of Prometheus who steals fire and then fears punishment, or of Lucifer who rebels against the source of light.

The act of humiliation is therefore a negation of the bond — and the final destiny, as in Jātaka, is the destruction of the ungrateful by the collective, that is, the return of the archetypal ethics that restores justice.

2. The dog, the cat and the elderly aunt

A single lady feeds a stray and a stray cat every day. Her nephew, whose studies she paid, never visits her. When the lady falls ill and falls in the house, it is the dog and cat who make noise until they attract the attention of the neighbors, saving her. The nephew, warned, does not even show up at the hospital. Animals act from the positive Shadow, from the instinct that has not removed the primary bond of care. The human, the nephew, is devoured by his egoic Shadow, which sees in the aunt only a burden. The treasure promised by the serpent and the mouse, here, is life itself returned.


SACCAṂKIRA JĀTAKA
and how it teaches through the Jungian lens
2. The Dog, the Cat, and the Old Aunt
A lonely woman feeds a stray dog and a stray cat every day.
Her nephew, whose studies she paid for,
never comes to visit her.
One day the woman falls ill and collapses in her home.
The dog and the cat make noise until they attract
the attention of the neighbors, who save her.
The nephew is informed, but he does not even visit
her in the hospital.
The animals act from the positive Shadow,
from the instinct that has not erased the primal bond of care.
The human, the nephew, is consumed by his egoic Shadow,
who sees in his aunt only a burden.
The treasure promised by the snake and the mouse
in this story is life itself, restored.
JUNGIAN READING
CHARACTERS AS ARCHETYPES
The Old Aunt = The Vulnerable Self
She represents the archetype of the
Great Old Mother, the part of the Self
that needs care and protection.
The Dog and the Cat = Instinct and Archetypal Loyalty
They embody the positive Shadow,
the instinctual intelligence that has not
lost the original bond of connection.
The Nephew = The Egoic Shadow
He represents the disconnected ego
that has repressed gratitude
and sees the other only as a burden.
THE PSYCHIC DYNAMICS
Animals act from a natural impulse of care: they are united with the deep Self.
The nephew is dominated by the egoic Shadow: inflated ego, lack of empathy.
The aunt's collapse = a crisis of the Self.
The animals' noise = the voice of instinct calling collective consciousness (the neighbors).
The rescue = momentary integration between instinct, community, and destiny.
SYMBOLISM OF THE STORY
Snake
Transformation,
renewal
+
Mouse
Humility,
attention to
the details
=
Treasure
Life saved,
the relationship
rediscovered
JUNGIAN KEY
When the ego moves away from the heart, the figures of the positive Shadow
(animals, dreams, symptoms, coincidences) bring us back
to the Truth of connection.
The treasure is not gold, but the saved Soul.
AXIS OF CONSCIOUSNESS
SELF
(wholeness, life)
POSITIVE SHADOW
(instinct, loyalty, original care)
EGOIC SHADOW
(egoism, rejection, injustice)
DISCONNECTION AND SUFFERING
"Animals know what
man has forgotten.
Listen to instinct,
it remembers
the Self."
– C.G. Jung

The image is presented as a narrative-hermeneutical poster that combines moral tale, Buddhist symbolism of the Saccaṃkira-jātaka and Jungian psychological interpretation. The composition is divided into two large areas: the narrative scene on the left and the symbolic analysis on the right.

Description of the scene

On the left side we see an elderly woman fallen on the floor of her house. His posture communicates fragility, vulnerability and helplessness. Next to her, a dog barks outwards while a cat seems to meow loudly. Both are depicted in an active and alert attitude.

In the background, some neighbors are entering the house with a lantern, attracted by the noise of the animals. The light of the lamp breaks the darkness of the room and introduces the theme of salvation.

The chromatic atmosphere is dominated by warm and earthy tones: brown, ochre and gold. This choice emphasizes the domestic character of the story and creates a strong contrast between the weakness of the elderly woman and the vitality of the animals.

Symbolic structure

The right side organizes the story according to a real archetypal map.

The elderly aunt: the vulnerable Self

The elderly woman is not just a concrete person.

In Jungian reading he becomes the symbol of that part of the psyche that needs care, attention and relationship.

We could call it:

the vulnerable Self;

the forgotten soul;

the human nucleus that cannot sustain itself.

His fall is a symbolic crisis: something essential in life is in danger of being lost.

Cat and Dog: The Positive Shadow

The most original element of the image is the definition of animals as Positive Shadow.

In Jung's psychology, the Shadow is not only the repository of the negative aspects of the personality. It also contains vital qualities that modern consciousness has repressed.

Here the dog and the cat embody:

loyalty;

spontaneous empathy;

protective instinct;

ability to respond immediately to suffering.

They do not act out of moral duty, social calculation or self-interest.

They act because they perceive the bond.

The image suggests that nature sometimes retains a wisdom that the civilized ego has forgotten.

The nephew: the egoic shadow

The absence of his nephew is more eloquent than his presence.

He does not appear in the main scene because his role is symbolically that of repression.

He represents:

ingratitude;

radical individualism;

the loss of the reciprocal bond.

His figure embodies what the poster calls the Egoic Shadow, that is, a shadow dominated by the ego that transforms the other into a burden rather than a relationship.

From a Jungian point of view, the nephew is an example of ego inflation: the subject has separated himself from the deep center of the personality and lives exclusively according to his own interests.

The vertical diagram

Very interesting is the column on the right:

Self → Positive Shadow → Egoic Shadow

It describes a true psychic hierarchy.

Top:

the Self;

the totality;

life.

In the center:

the integrated instinct;

fidelity;

the cure.

Bottom:

selfishness;

disconnection;

suffering.

The image suggests that the passage to the Self does not occur by denying instinct but by retrieving it.

It is a theme very close to Jung: what saves is not the elimination of the Shadow, but its integration.

The Snake and the Mouse

A formula appears in the symbolic box:

Snake + Mouse = Treasure

Here the poster recalls the Saccaṃkira-jātaka.

Traditionally:

the snake represents transformation and renewal;

The mouse represents attention to detail and humility.

In the rereading of the image, the treasure is not material.

The bright heart indicates that the real treasure is:

the life saved;

the rediscovered relationship;

compassion that manifests itself.

It is a very significant transformation of the original symbol: the treasure becomes an existential and not an economic value.

The meaning of the lantern

An easily overlooked detail is the lantern brought by neighbors.

On the archetypal level, it represents:

the intervening conscience;

the light that emerges from the unconscious;

the collective recognition of need.

Animals call community and community brings light.

In Jungian terms:

Instinct opens the way to consciousness.

Overall comment

The image develops a very strong thesis:

Animals are not presented as inferior to man, but as guardians of a form of original fidelity that human beings can lose.

From a symbolic point of view, the real protagonist is neither the aunt nor the nephew.

It is the bond.

When the link is forgotten, the egoic Shadow is born.

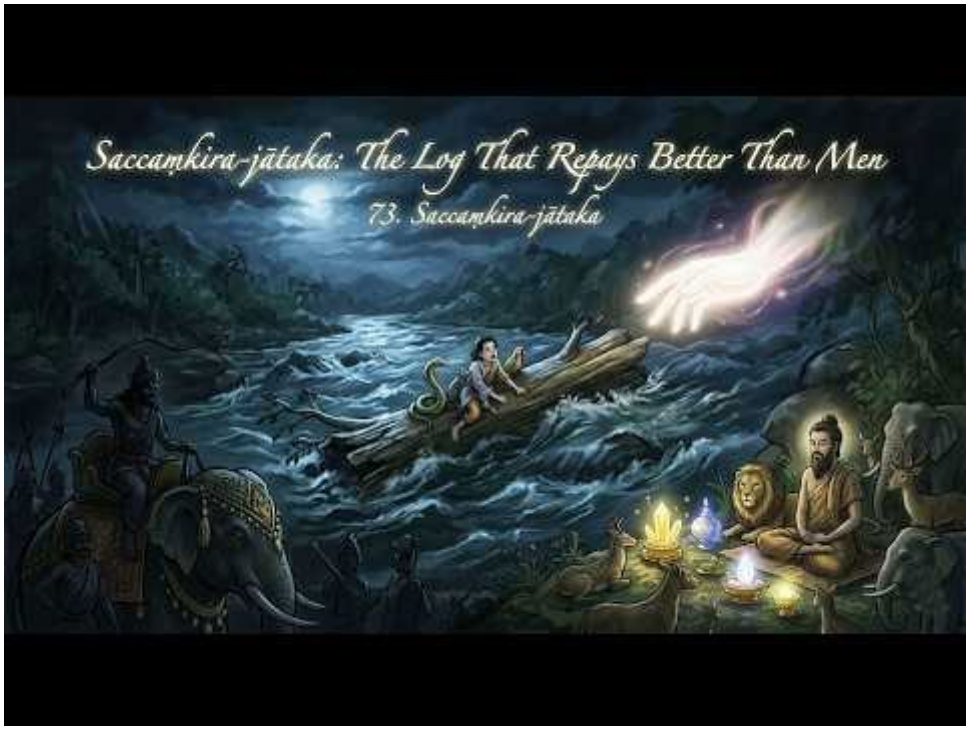
When the bond is heard, the positive Shadow emerges.

For this reason, the final "treasure" is not the reward promised in fairy tales, but something deeper: the rediscovery of the fundamental connection between living beings.

In a perspective that unites Jung, the Saccaṃkira-jātaka and your sensitivity to the theme of awakening, the image seems to suggest that salvation often comes from those dimensions of the psyche that culture considers minor: instinct, spontaneous compassion, silent fidelity and uncalculated care. That's where the real treasure lies.

Video

https://youtu.be/99XrrKNnDcs



Carousel Table – Jātaka 73 with Jungian Integration

	Slide Title	Scene / Visual Description	Narrative anecdote (Jātaka 73)	Jungian Reference / Psychological Anecdote
1	The river in flood	A dark trunk swept away by the waves, four clinging silhouettes: a terrified boy, a snake, a mouse, a parrot. Rain and chaos.	The Evil Prince, thrown into the river by the servants, clings to a trunk where three animals have already found	**The dark night of the soul.** The full is the activation of the unconscious that overwhelms the *person* (the prince). On the "trunk of salvation" we are all creatures on the same level, stripped of any role.

Slide	Title	Scene / Visual Description	Narrative anecdote (Jātaka 73)	Jungian Reference / Psychological Anecdote
			refuge fleeing from their flooded dens.	
2	The indiscriminate rescue	An ascetic of superhuman strength emerges from the night, grabs the trunk with one arm and pulls it to shore. On the beach, four soaked bodies.	The ascetic Bodhisatta hears the cries, dives in and saves the whole trunk, without selecting who to save. Then he lights the fire and cures first the animals, then the human.	**The compassion of the Self.** The Self (the Bodhisatta) does not discriminate. It welcomes the Prince's Shadow along with (animal) instincts. Prioritizing animals is an act of justice towards the most fragile and authentic parts of the psyche.
3	The pact and the grudge	In the foreground, the prince, with a grim look. In the background, blurred, the animals bow to the ascetic. A crack divides the image.	Healed, animals promise treasure; The prince promises goods but harbors hatred. Wounded because he was treated second, he plans the murder of the savior.	**The narcissistic wound and the Shadow.** Not having been in first place is unbearable for the inflated ego. The debt of gratitude is experienced as castration. The Shadow swells: in order not to feel guilty, the ungrateful wants to eliminate the witness of his own fragility.
4	The three faithful	The ascetic standing in front of three scenes: a snake showing a chest; a mouse on a mound of gold; a parrot with a grain of rice in its beak.	The ascetic tests his promises. The snake and the mouse offer their hidden treasures without hesitation. The parrot promises loads of rice. Everyone recognizes him with joy.	**The archetype of the embodied gift.** Animals represent instincts that are not corrupted by the ego. Their gratitude is immediate, without calculation. They are the image of a psyche where the link with the Self has not been severed.
5	The whip and the proverb	A man chained, whipped in the street. The crowd watches silently. He doesn't shout, but whispers words that materialize in the air: "A trunk pays off better."	The evil king orders the ascetic to be whipped on every street corner and then killed. Under the blows, the ascetic does not groan, but repeats the ancient maxim about the gratitude of a log.	**Testify without accusing.** The ascetic does not react with the Shadow (revenge). His non-reaction forces those present to an inner confrontation. It is emptiness that unmasks injustice. The proverb is a *verbal mandala* that recomposes the shattered meaning.
6	The Restored Kingdom	The ascetic now sits on a throne, with a simple crown. At his feet, a snake in a golden pipe, a mouse in a crystal case,	The people kill the tyrant and crown the ascetic. He recovers the treasures and brings the animals to the palace, living with them in	**The integration of the Self.** The center of consciousness (the ascetic-king) now rules in harmony with the transformed instincts (animals in precious vessels). Psychic energy (treasures) is no

Slide Title	Scene / Visual Description	Narrative anecdote (Jātaka 73)	Jungian Reference / Psychological Anecdote
	a parrot in a golden cage.	friendship and ruling with justice.	longer hidden in the unconscious, but is at the service of the totality.

The apophatic dimension of the Saccaṃkira-jātaka

The Jataka does not explain why the Evil Prince is ungrateful. There is no psychological analysis of his childhood, nor an explicit moral condemnation by the Bodhisatta. Simply, the story shows the fact: ingratitude happens, as an inexplicable fact of human freedom.

The apophatic dimension explodes in the flogging scene. The Bodhisatta repeats a proverb: "They knew the world, who told this true proverb—'A log pays better than some men.'" It is not an explanation, it is a custody of the mystery. That phrase does not communicate a new concept to the king or the crowd. It resonates as something already known, suddenly "familiar" not because one understands it with the mind, but because something in the interiority is silent and recognizes simultaneously.

The mystery guarded is this: the radical possibility of evil (hatred for those who have done you good) coexists with the radical possibility of good (disinterested care). The Jataka does not reconcile or explain them. He holds them together in the gesture of rescue and in silence under the whip. It is knowledge without a concept. The truth does not lie in a final doctrine, but in the experience of witnessing that scene: a just man who does not curse his executioner, but entrusts his truth to an impersonal saying, as if wisdom spoke through him, not about him.

This is the heart of the asceticism of the heart: to become a trunk, a wood that does not react, but that has already saved and that, simply, by floating, bears witness to a law that does not need to be defended because it is the very foundation of reality.

74. Rukkhadhamma-jātaka

– Unity is strength, among trees as well as among men.

Scene: A forest of united trees resists the wind; isolated trees fall.

Daily life: Community, solidarity, families that support each other.

Jung: The collective unconscious as a network that saves from isolation.

Synopsis of the plot

During an assembly of tree spirits (devatā), the new king Vessavana allows them to freely choose their home. The Bodhisatta, born as the spirit of a sāl tree, advises his relatives to settle with him in the forest, forming a united forest. Wise spirits accept; the foolish ones, attracted by honors and offerings, choose solitary and majestic trees near the villages. A violent storm arrives: the isolated trees, however powerful, are uprooted and broken, while the forest of sāl, with intertwined branches and roots, resists unscathed. The surviving spirits, with their children in their arms, return weeping to the Bodhisatta, who pronounces the verse: "United, like a forest, must be the relatives; the storm knocks down the lonely tree."

Dramatic Structure

- Characters: The Bodhisatta (wise spirit of the sāl tree), the wise spirit-relatives, the foolish spirit-relatives, King Vessavaṇa (divine figure who triggers choice), the storm (impersonal antagonist).

- Conflict: The choice between the path of protective community (the forest) and that of flashy individualism (the solitary tree exposed to human honors).

- Turning point: The arrival of the storm, which transforms the theoretical choice into a concrete and ruthless destiny.

- Outcome: The destruction of the isolated trees and the humiliated and suffering return of the foolish spirits, who become living witnesses of the truth spoken by the Bodhisatta.

Explicit teaching

"United, like a forest, the relatives must be." The union and concord between blood relatives and members of a community are the necessary condition for resisting adversity. Strength does not lie in individual size, but in the cohesion of the group. Division exposes even the most powerful individual to ruin.

Implicit teaching

The attraction of immediate reward (offerings, worship) blinds and isolates. Wisdom consists in discerning the invisible protection of the community from the dangerous visibility of individual exposure. Moreover, the return of the foolish does not trigger a judgment of condemnation, but a simple statement of the truth: error is not a fault to be punished, but ignorance that finds its own refutation in suffering. The wise community does not exclude, but welcomes back those who have erred, offering as its only "reproach" its own surviving integrity.

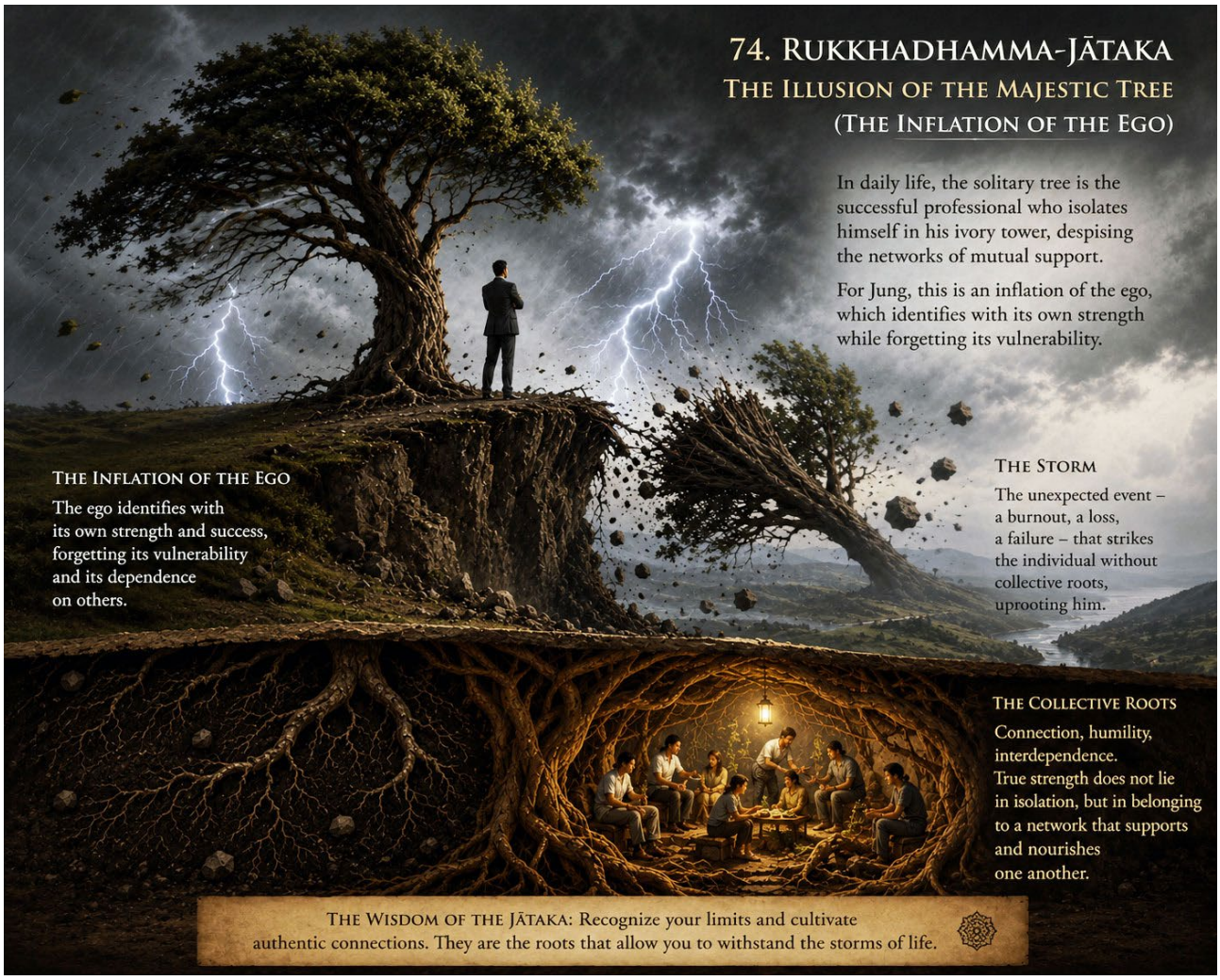
Relationship with the essay and Level I

This Jātaka embodies the ethical foundation of Level I: visible and everyday harmony arises from a gesture of relational choice. It corresponds to the construction of the Jungian Persona, the adaptation to society that here takes the form of co-belonging. However, the forest is not just a functional aggregation: it is a living body where branches intertwine, where the boundary between one tree and another becomes porous. This is the seed of transcendence: ethical union becomes a symbol of a deeper unity, which overcomes separate identity without annulling it. Beyond the name (the single tree), the plot of the forest is already a dream of interconnection, a door to a threshold where the "I" discovers itself as part of a wider breath, but still held within a form. Level 1 lays the foundations: without this ethics of "we", the silence that will come cannot stand.

Jungian anecdotes and daily life

- The illusion of the majestic tree (The inflation of the Ego).

In daily life, the lone tree is the successful professional who isolates himself in his ivory tower, despising mutual support networks. For Jung, this is an inflation of the ego, which identifies itself with its own strength while forgetting its own vulnerability. The storm is the unexpected event – a burnout, a mourning, a failure – that finds the individual without collective roots, uprooting him.


74. RUKKHADHAMMA-JĀTAKA
THE ILLUSION OF THE MAJESTIC TREE
(THE INFLATION OF THE EGO)
In daily life, the solitary tree is the successful professional who isolates himself in his ivory tower, despising the networks of mutual support.
For Jung, this is an inflation of the ego, which identifies with its own strength while forgetting its vulnerability.
THE INFLATION OF THE EGO
The ego identifies with its own strength and success, forgetting its vulnerability and its dependence on others.
THE STORM
The unexpected event – a burnout, a loss, a failure – that strikes the individual without collective roots, uprooting him.
THE COLLECTIVE ROOTS
Connection, humility, interdependence. True strength does not lie in isolation, but in belonging to a network that supports and nourishes one another.
THE WISDOM OF THE JĀTAKA: Recognize your limits and cultivate authentic connections. They are the roots that allow you to withstand the storms of life.

The image is constructed as a real Jungian narrative mandala, where the external landscape represents an inner state of the psyche. He does not simply illustrate the *Rukkhadhamma-jātaka*, but translates it into a symbolic language close to Jung's analytical psychology.

Overview

The work is divided into two worlds:

- The surface, dominated by the storm, the lightning and the isolated tree.
- The underground, illuminated by a warm light, where a community lives within a network of intertwined roots.

This vertical structure creates a symbolic axis that goes from the conscious Ego to the deepest dimension of the relational and collective Self.

The majestic tree

The tree on the cliff appears huge, powerful, almost regal. It is the symbol of the individual who identifies himself with:

- success,
- self-sufficiency,
- prestige,
- control.

From the Jungian point of view, it represents the inflation of the ego. The inflated ego does not simply say:

"I'm competent."

but rather:

"I don't need anyone."

The tree grows in solitude. His greatness becomes his fragility. The higher it is, the more exposed it is. The more isolated it is, the less it has invisible supports.

The Man in a Jacket

The human figure placed next to the trunk is fundamental.

He is not working.

He is not dialoguing.

He doesn't look at other people.

Contemplate your own domain.

It could be:

- a manager,
- an academic,
- a spiritual leader,
- an intellectual.

In archetypal terms, it represents the subject identified with the Person, the social mask of success.

Jung would probably have observed that the individual has become what he appears to others, forgetting what he really is.

The cliff

The tree does not grow in a forest.

It grows on a cliff.

The cliff symbolizes a separate psychological position.

It is the "ivory tower".

From the spiritual point of view, it is the illusion of individual transcendence: rising above others instead of growing together with others.

The storm

The most dramatic part of the image is the sky.

Lightning and black clouds converge towards the tree.

In Jungian reading, the storm represents the irruption of the unconscious.

It can take many forms:

- burnout,
- depression,
- professional failure,
- disease,
- emotional loss,
- spiritual crisis.

Life introduces something that the ego cannot control. Inflation is then corrected by reality. Jung often called these events "compensations." When the Ego expands excessively, the psyche tends to restore balance.

The Uprooted Tree

On the right we see the tree being torn off the ground. This is the central scene. It is not simply destruction. It's a revelation. The storm does not create weakness. It makes it visible. The tree falls because its roots were insufficient. In the same way, the crisis does not necessarily create inner emptiness: it manifests it.

The subsoil

Here the picture changes completely. Cool colors give way to golden tones. Fear gives way to communion. The roots form almost a natural cathedral. In Jungian terms we have entered the area of the collective unconscious. No longer the separate individual. No longer personal success. But the invisible network that sustains life.

The intertwined roots

The roots are the real protagonist of the work. They are hidden. Yet they support everything. This is one of the deepest symbols in the image.

The roots represent:

- friendship,
- family,

tradition,

community,

culture,

solidarity,

ancestral memory.

Jung would perhaps have said that they represent the bonds through which the Self manifests itself. What saves is not absolute autonomy. It is belonging.

The enlightened community

The underground scene resembles a shared table. People talk, collaborate, listen. The central lamp almost takes on the role of an inner sun. Psychologically it represents the consciousness that arises from the relationship. Jungian individuation does not lead to isolation. It leads to a more authentic form of participation in the world.

A Reading Through Negative Theology

If we read the image in the light of apophatic theology, the message becomes even more radical. The majestic tree represents the illusion of constructed identity:

"I am my role",

"I am my knowledge",

"I am my success".

The storm then becomes a path of dispossession. It destroys what we thought we were. The roots, on the other hand, represent what remains when all definitions fall. Not a glorified identity. But a silent communion. An existence based on relationship and not on possession.

Final summary

The image tells a universal psychological and spiritual truth: the tallest tree is not necessarily the strongest. Authentic strength does not come from self-sufficiency. It comes from invisible roots. This is why *Rukkhadhamma-jātaka* and Jung surprisingly converge in the same teaching: He who identifies with his greatness is struck down by the storm.

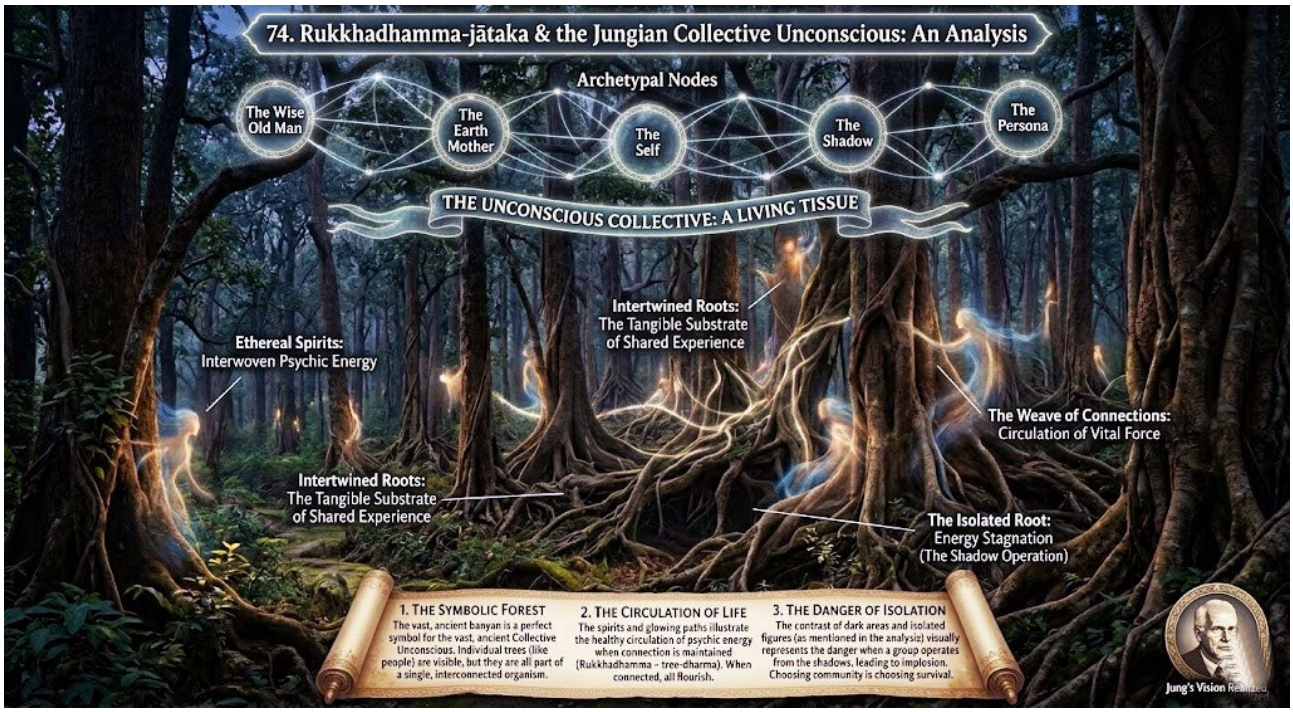
Those who recognize their interdependence find in common roots a strength capable of overcoming the crises of life.

The entire composition can be read as a visual meditation on the passage from the inflated ego to the relational self, from the illusion of separation to the discovery of interconnection.

- The forest as a collective unconscious.

The forest of sāl, with its spirits that inhabit it, is a powerful image of the collective unconscious: not a sum of individuals, but a living weave of archetypal connections. To choose the community is to choose to inhabit

this deep layer, where psychic energy circulates and sustains. When everyone in a family or team operates in the shadows, isolated, the energy stops and the group implodes at the first crisis.


74. Rukkhadhamma-jātaka & the Jungian Collective Unconscious: An Analysis
Archetypal Nodes
The Wise Old Man
The Earth Mother
The Self
The Shadow
The Persona
THE UNCONSCIOUS COLLECTIVE: A LIVING TISSUE
Intertwined Roots: The Tangible Substrate of Shared Experience
Ethereal Spirits: Interwoven Psychic Energy
The Weave of Connections: Circulation of Vital Force
Intertwined Roots: The Tangible Substrate of Shared Experience
The Isolated Root: Energy Stagnation (The Shadow Operation)
1. THE SYMBOLIC FOREST
The vast, ancient banyan is a perfect symbol for the vast, ancient Collective Unconscious. Individual trees (like people) are visible, but they are all part of a single, interconnected organism.
2. THE CIRCULATION OF LIFE
The spirits and glowing paths illustrate the healthy circulation of psychic energy when connection is maintained (Rukkhadhamma - tree-dharma). When connected, all flourish.
3. THE DANGER OF ISOLATION
The contrast of dark areas and isolated figures (as mentioned in the analysis) visually represents the danger when a group operates from the shadows, leading to implosion. Choosing community is choosing survival.
Jung's Vision Realized

Visual description and composition

The image is conceived as a sophisticated explanatory diagram, where visual art merges with text to analyze a complex philosophical connection. It is structured as a didactic work of art, divided into two main sections: an immersive visual part and a series of overlapping text diagrams.

The visual basis:

The foundation of the image is a dense ancient, primordial and twilight forest. The scene is dominated by gigantic trees (identified as banyans or "Bengali Ficus trees," known for their vast network of aerial and terrestrial roots) that form an intricate three-dimensional network of winding trunks and exposed roots. The lighting is soft and magical; A warm, amber light filters through the foliage, creating a stark contrast with the deep shadows of the undergrowth.

Within this natural setting, ethereal, almost ghostly figures are visible. They are not solid people, but luminous silhouettes, made of intertwined light, moving and dancing among the trunks. Some appear to form cohesive groups, while others, more isolated, appear as single filaments of light. These figures are directly connected by beams of light that seem to emanate from the roots and trunks, as if the forest itself were a nervous or vascular system that connects them.

Above the forest, the image presents a series of methodically organized textual elements:

1. The Upper Title: In the center, a framed and illuminated title reads: "74. Rukkhadhamma-jātaka & The Jungian Collective Unconscious: An Analysis". This establishes the central theme.

2. The Archetypal Nodes: Under the main title, a series of circles connected by luminous lines (a graph of nodes) analyzes the main Jungian archetypes. Starting from left to right, the nodes are: "The Wise Old Man", "Mother Earth", "The Self", "The Shadow", "The Person". A caption below the graph indicates: "Archetypal Nodes: The Structure of the Collective Unconscious".

3. Detail Labels: Multiple arrows and thin lines connect textual concepts directly to visual elements in the forest:

Above the ethereal figures on the left: "Ethereal Spirits: Intertwined Psychic Energy".

Above the mass of aerial roots: "Intertwined Roots: The Tangible Substratum of Shared Experience."

Above the central tangle of lights: "The Texture of Connections: Circulation of the Life Force".

Next to a dark, isolated root on the right: "The Isolated Root: Energy Stagnation (The Shadow Operation)."

4. The Final Scroll: At the bottom, a rolled parchment title block contains a commentary text structured in three numbered points. This text analyzes the connections in detail, as explained in the analysis below.

5. The Lower Right Corner: A medallion with an aged portrait of Carl Jung and the inscription: "Carl Jung" above and "Jung's Vision Realized" below, closing the work.

Analysis and Commentary

This image is not just an illustration, but an ambitious attempt to visualize the invisible: the fusion between an ancient Buddhist parable (Rukkhadhamma-jātaka) and a modern psychological theory (Jung's Collective Unconscious). The image manages to create a bridge between East and West, between ancient wisdom and scientific analysis.

The metaphor of the forest and roots:

The banyan forest, with its aerial roots that descend to the ground and merge with the trunks, is the perfect metaphor for the Collective Unconscious. Each tree is visible individually, but all are actually part of a single, vast, interconnected organism. The intricate roots, labeled as "the tangible substrate of shared experience", visually show how our individual experiences are actually "rooted" in a common substrate, the collective unconscious. We are not isolated individuals, but leaves and branches of a single cosmic tree.

The visualization of energy and spirits:

The ethereal figures, the "spirits", are not separate religious entities, but represent "psychic energy" (as specified by the label). Visualizing them as intertwined beams of light shows that the energy is not stagnant; it moves and connects. This represents the "archetypes", the "archetypal nodes" shown in the diagram above. Jung believed that these archetypes (such as the Old Sage or Mother Earth) were patterns of energy that shape the human experience and that reside in this common substrate. The connection between spirits and roots emphasizes that this psychic energy comes from our shared experience.

The philosophical and psychological commentary (the final text):

The final text in the title block offers a direct explanation of the visual concepts:

1. The Symbolic Forest: Clarifies that the forest is a symbol of the Collective Unconscious, where all beings are "parts of a single interconnected organism". This unity is the key to the parable of Rukkhadhamma-jātaka, which often concerns the community of beings who share the same forest.

2. The Circulation of Life: Explain that the "healthy circulation of psychic energy" occurs when the connection is maintained. This is the concept of "Rukkhadhamma" (the dharma of the tree, the law of the forest), according to which all beings thrive when they are in harmony.

3. The Danger of Isolation: Warns that "danger lurks when a group operates in the shadows," leading to implosion. Visually, this is represented by the "isolated root", dark and separated from the tangle of lights and luminous roots. The image shows how isolation leads to blocked and stagnant energy, the exact opposite of the vital circulation visible in the center.

Conclusion:

The image generates a powerful visual commentary that demonstrates how Jung's theory of the collective unconscious can be seen as a modern validation of the wisdom expressed in the parable of Rukkhadhamma-jātaka. The forest itself, with its interconnected roots, becomes a temple of the collective unconscious, a place where human experience is woven together into a single tapestry of psychic energy. The image is an exhortation to recognize and nurture this connection, suggesting that the survival and prosperity of the group, whether a family or a team, depends on the community's choice over isolation in the shadows.

- The return of fools: the integration of the shadow.

Foolish spirits who return defeated are not enemies, but bearers of a precious experience. They represent the Jungian shadow of the community: the part that has succumbed to vanity, to greed for recognition, and that has failed. The wise community does not chase them away, but listens to their story and, in doing so, integrates the shadow, making the forest even stronger. In the family, it is the member who has made a mistake and who, welcomed back without judgment, becomes the most faithful guardian of the bond.

The image is a visual exploration of the integration of Jungian shadow, transposed into the context of Rukkhadhamma-jātaka. Instead of a simple botanical representation of trees helping each other, I chose a more symbolic and anthropomorphic approach to highlight the psychological dimensions of the anecdote.

Analysis and Description:

The image depicts a community of nature spirits, meta-human beings fused with the forest itself, endowed with bodies composed of bark, branches and thick foliage. At the center of the scene, the focus is on the fundamental contrast of the theme. On the one hand, a group of "foolish" spirits approaches, but they are not just bare trees; they are represented as obscured human figures, wrapped in gray and worn clothes, who move with a heavy step and a lowered gaze. Their darkness is a clear metaphor for their essence as a Jungian "shadow": that part of the psyche that the community has rejected or has not recognized. They came to bring defeat and the experience of failure, essential elements for learning.

On the other hand, the wise community of the forest is not represented with an attitude of repulsion. On the contrary, an elderly and bright spirit-tree, with a thick foliage and a golden aura that emanates wisdom, stretches out with a gesture of pure welcome. His arm extends to another spirit, still partially immersed in darkness but visibly willing to listen. This gesture is crucial: it is the action of listening and welcoming that transforms the forest, allowing the shade to be integrated.

The surrounding community does not take sides against the returnees, but surrounds them with respect and listening. The faces of the members of the community do not show judgment, but composed observation. The atmosphere of the image is dense and enveloping, with a golden light filtering through the foliage of the trees, a symbol of wisdom and truth that makes its way through the darkness.

Symbolic comment:

The image perfectly captures the Jungian dynamics of shadow integration. There is no struggle between good and evil, but a recognition of the necessity of "evil" (failure, error) for the achievement of greater completeness. The portrayal of "foolish" spirits as human shadow figures does not make them strangers, but

part of the very essence of the community, only "hidden" or not accepted. The strength of the forest does not come from its perfection, but from its ability to absorb and learn from every experience, even the most difficult and painful.

The image is a powerful warning: the integration of the shadow is not just an individual act, but a community process that requires courage, compassion and a deep ability to listen. The image not only depicts the anecdote of the Jātaka, but transforms it into a visual icon of shadow integration, making it accessible and understandable to anyone.

Carousel table. 74. Rukkhadhamma-jātaka with Jungian integration

Slide	Title	Scene / visual description	Narrative anecdote (Jātaka 74)	Jungian Reference / Psychological Anecdote
1	**The original choice**	A vast landscape suspended between an intricate forest and a gigantic and solitary tree, under a sky full of omens. Luminous spirits are divided into two groups.	The divine king grants the spirits the freedom to choose their own home. The Bodhisatta advises us to remain united in the forest; the wise follow him, the foolish choose solitary trees near men to receive honors.	**The Person and the social choice**. It is the moment in which the individual structures his *Persona*: adapting to the community (forest) or performing for external recognition (solitary tree). Choice defines psychic destiny.
2	**The storm and the reckoning**	A dark-colored hurricane hits. The lonely tree breaks violently, branches flying away. The forest of sāl sways compactly, like a single body; the wind slides over without entering.	The storm uproots and destroys all isolated trees, no matter how powerful. The forest of sāl, with its intertwined foliage and roots, resists without suffering any damage.	**Detection tests vs. inflation**. The crisis (the "dark night") destroys those who have an inflated and isolated ego. Those who are rooted in the Self and in the unconscious community resist. The tree alone is the tragic hero, the forest is the collective hero.
3	**The wisdom that does not condemn**	Close-up of the Bodhisatta, bright and peaceful. In the background, the escaped spirits, with children in their arms and their heads bowed, listen. The face of the Bodhisatta has no traits of judgment, only presence.	The surviving spirits return crying. The Bodhisatta does not reproach them: he simply declares the natural law "united as a forest" as a self-evident truth, made manifest by their own experience.	**The integration of the Shadow**. The wise community does not project evil onto error. It welcomes the story of the "fools" as part of its history, integrating the Shadow and making the forest more complete and resilient.

The apophatic dimension: the mystery of the silent forest

The parable is perfect, almost didactic in its clarity, yet in its heart it holds a silence that no explanation can violate. Why does the forest resist? The logical answer is: "Because the trees are united". But what is this union? It is not a pact, it is not a strategy, it is not a superstructure. The Jātaka does not explain it to us. He says: "because the trees, bushes and vines of that forest were intertwined with each other". The interweaving is a given of nature, not a product of the will.

Here the apophatic dimension opens up. The story preserves a phenomenon without reducing it to a mechanism. It does not say how the interweaving blocks the wind (fluid dynamics does not interest us), nor does it elaborate a metaphysics of unity. He just points to it. The mystery is that the identity of each tree is not erased, but transfigured by interconnection. Storm resistance is not the sum of forces, but an emerging and elusive quality of the "forest" as a subject. The forest is, at the same time, many and one.

This mystery seems "suddenly familiar" to us not because our mind labels it as "solidarity" or "social network", but because deep down we are that forest. When we read that the branches touch each other and the wind passes by, something in the soul is silent and recognizes: it is the knowledge of the collective unconscious, the place where I and the other are not yet divided. The calm after the storm, in the safe forest, is the image of a peace that is not the absence of conflict, but the presence of an organic totality. The Jātaka does not explain the phenomenon: it places it in the heart of the listener like a seed that can remain there, silent, until a storm of life awakens him, showing that the truth was already there, intertwined with our deepest roots, waiting to be lived and not understood.

Video

https://youtu.be/v7qgWpYzAQ8

75. Maccha-Jātaka

– Virtuous fish puts an end to drought and saves relatives.

Scene: A fish offers its body and proclaims the truth, the rain falls.

Daily life: The selfless sacrifice that regenerates the environment.

Jung: The archetype of the Self that gives itself for cosmic balance.

75. Maccha-Jātaka – The Fish That Called the Rain

Synopsis of the plot

Jātaka 75 is set in a narrative frame that takes us directly into the life of the historical Buddha. In Sāvatthi, in the kingdom of Kosala, a drought dries up every body of water, including Lake Jetavana. Fish and turtles get muddy in the mud and are torn apart by crows and hawks. The Master, moved by compassion, puts on a bath towel and stops on the steps of the now dry lake, declaring: "I would like to bathe in the pond of Jetavana". Immediately Sakka's throne heats up; the god senses the Buddha's desire and orders the Lord of the Clouds to pour a flood over the entire region. The rain pours down uninterrupted until the water reaches the last step, and the Buddha immerses.

Later, in the Hall of Truth, the monks praised the Master's compassion, and the Master replied: "It is not the first time that the Blessed One has caused rain to fall in a time of extreme need. Already in an animal birth, when I was the King of the Pisces, the same happened." And it tells the past story.

In the same place, in a remote time, the Bodhisatta lived like a large fish in a pond surrounded by climbing plants. Drought came, the water vanished, the fish hid in the mud, and the birds began to flush them out and devour them. Seeing the slaughter of his relatives, the Bodhisatta tore through the mud, emerged—a mighty fish blackened by silt like a sandalwood casket smeared with eye drops—and, raising his ruby eyes to the sky, called upon Pajjunna, the god of the storm, and proclaimed the truth of his innocence: never, in all his life, had he killed or devoured a single living being. By virtue of this profession of truth, he asked for rain. Immediately the sky opened, the flood saved the fish, and life flourished again.

Dramatic Structure

- Characters: The Bodhisatta-King of the Pisces; Pajjunna, king of the cloud gods; the related fish; birds of prey (crows, hawks); in the frame, the Buddha and Sakka.

- Conflict: Drought threatens to annihilate the entire fishing community; predators exploit vulnerability. It is a crisis of survival that mirrors the drying up of the world when dharma fails.

- Turning point: The Bodhisatta decides not to suffer passively, but to come out and appeal to the truth of his conduct, offering his body to danger and his speech to heaven.

- Outcome: The rain falls abundantly, the fish are safe, and the link between inner purity and cosmic order is re-established.

Explicit teaching

The account openly declares that the practice of truth (*sacca-kiriya*), combined with unlimited compassion, has a transformative power that transcends natural laws. Radical non-violence – the refusal to eat one's fellow human beings even though one's own species does so instinctively – becomes a source of spiritual authority. The fish speaks to Pajjunna "as a master calls a servant", because ethical purity gives him a lordship over the forces of heaven.

Implicit teaching

Beneath the surface, Maccha-Jātaka hides a more subtle message: salvation comes not from a heroic act of strength, but from a vulnerable exposure of one's innocence. The fish does not fight predators or dig canals: it emerges from the mud, shows itself as it is, and *tells* the truth. Decisive action is a word, a testimony to one's integrity.

Moreover, the Bodhisatta's body, described as a sandalwood casket smeared with eye drops, indicates that beauty and preciousness dwell precisely where the ordinary gaze sees only mud and dirt. The jewel is hidden in the silt - the lighting is already present in the darkest conditions. Finally, the frame shows the historical

Buddha reactivating this same power: the truth of the Awakened One is no different from that of the fish, only fully unfolded.

Relationship with the essay and Level I

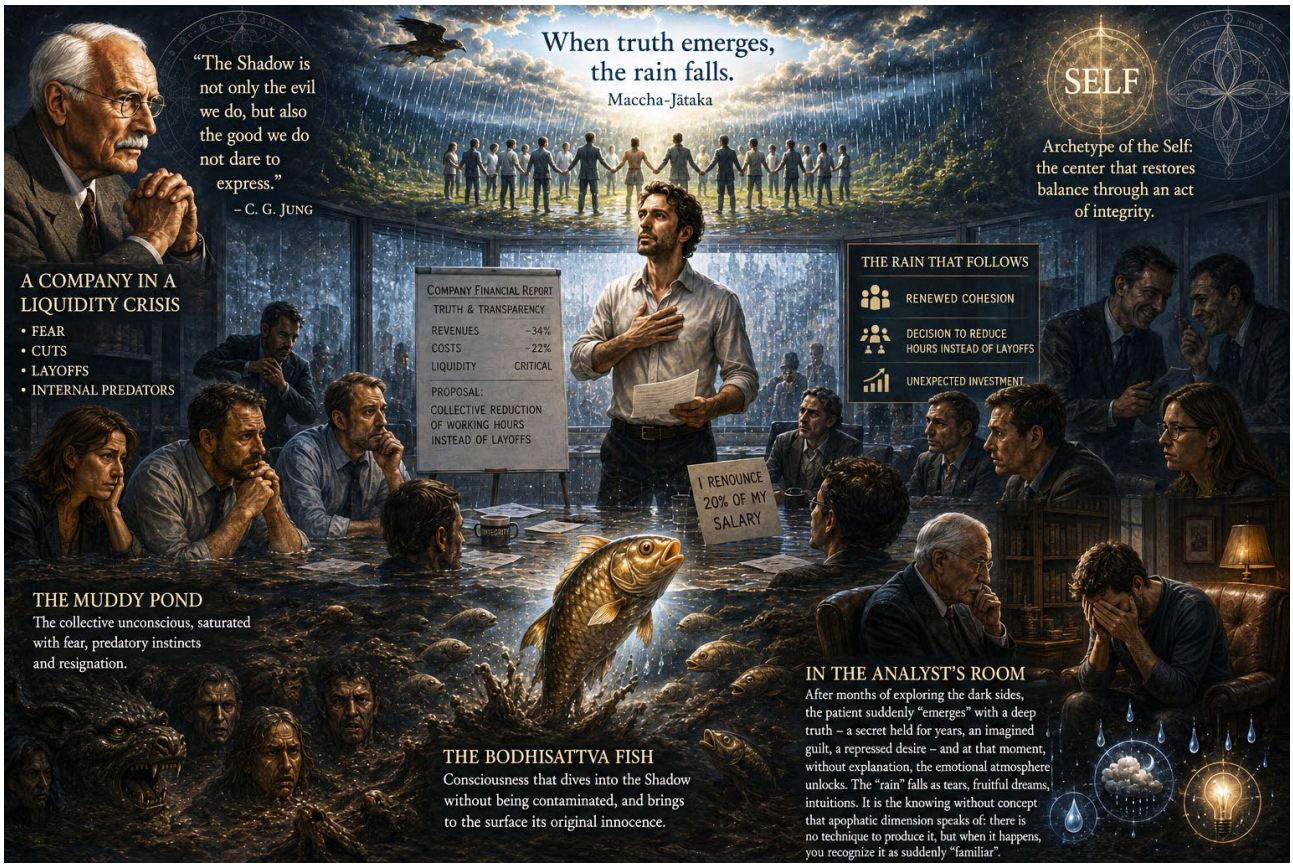
Level I of our path investigates the "gestures that weave the world", those daily actions that build a harmonious coexistence and correspond, in a Jungian key, to the construction of a solid social *person*. In Maccha-Jātaka the gesture is twofold: the fish *comes out of the mud* (breaking the defensive isolation) and *pronounces the truth* (offering its integrity as a public act). These are two elementary movements of everyday ethics: coming out of hiddenness and speaking with sincerity.

Disinterested sacrifice here is not a physical immolation, but a gift of one's own transparency. This weaves the world because it regenerates cosmic trust: the rain returns when someone reminds the sky of the order of dharma. The Jungian "person" who adapts to society is transfigured here: the fish does not adapt to the ruthless law of predators, but embodies another law, that of non-violence, showing that the true basis of coexistence is not force but truth. And yet, already in this "horizontal" gesture the germ of transcendence pulsates: the profession of truth opens a door to the Absolute.

Exciting anecdotes in everyday life and with Karl Jung

Let's imagine a company in the midst of a liquidity crisis: employees, like fish in the mud, feel exposed to cuts and layoffs, while internal "predators" take advantage of fear to accumulate power. An employee, without any formal authority, decides to publicly tell the truth of the financial statements and to propose a gesture of radical transparency: he gives up a part of his salary so that the most fragile colleagues are not fired. He is not making a strategic calculation: he is simply emerging from the mud and saying what is true, offering his professional body to risk. The "rain" that follows can be a newfound cohesion, the decision of the top management to opt for a collective reduction in hours instead of firing, or even an unexpected investment. From the Jungian point of view, this man has activated the archetype of the Self: not the hero who defeats the dragon, but the center who restores balance with an act of integrity.

Jung reminds us that the Shadow is not only the evil we do, but also the good we dare not express. The mud of the pond is the collective unconscious saturated with fears, predatory instincts and resignation. The Bodhisatta fish represents the consciousness that immerses itself in the Shadow without being contaminated by it, and that brings its original innocence to the surface. In the analysis room, it often happens that the patient, after months of exploring his or her own dark areas, suddenly "emerges" with a confession of profound truth – a secret kept for years, an imaginary guilt, a repressed desire – and in that moment, without it being possible to explain, the emotional atmosphere is unblocked. The "rain" falls in the form of tears, fruitful dreams, intuitions. It is the knowledge without concept of which the apophatic dimension speaks: there is no technique to produce it, but when it happens it is suddenly recognized as "familiar".


"The Shadow is not only the evil we do, but also the good we do not dare to express."
– C. G. JUNG
When truth emerges, the rain falls.
Maccha-Jātaka
SELF
Archetype of the Self: the center that restores balance through an act of integrity.
A COMPANY IN A LIQUIDITY CRISIS
• FEAR
• CUTS
• LAYOFFS
• INTERNAL PREDATORS
COMPANY FINANCIAL REPORT
TRUTH & TRANSPARENCY
REVENUES –34%
COSTS –22%
LIQUIDITY CRITICAL
PROPOSAL: COLLECTIVE REDUCTION OF WORKING HOURS INSTEAD OF LAYOFFS
THE RAIN THAT FOLLOWS
RENEWED COHESION
DECISION TO REDUCE HOURS INSTEAD OF LAYOFFS
UNEXPECTED INVESTMENT
I RENOUNCE 20% OF MY SALARY
THE MUDDY POND
The collective unconscious, saturated with fear, predatory instincts and resignation.
THE BODHISATTVA FISH
Consciousness that dives into the Shadow without being contaminated, and brings to the surface its original innocence.
IN THE ANALYST'S ROOM
After months of exploring the dark sides, the patient suddenly "emerges" with a deep truth – a secret held for years, an imagined guilt, a repressed desire – and at that moment, without explanation, the emotional atmosphere unlocks. The "rain" falls as tears, fruitful dreams, intuitions. It is the knowing without concept that apophatic dimension speaks of: there is no technique to produce it, but when it happens, you recognize it as suddenly "familiar".

The image is much more than a narrative illustration: it is a real Jungian and apophatic symbolic map, in which the story of Maccha-Jātaka is transposed into the language of contemporary corporate life.

Overview

The composition is organized like a narrative mandala. At the center is the man who speaks in front of his colleagues. He is not depicted as a charismatic leader or a triumphant savior. His gesture is simple: a hand on his chest, a sheet of paper in his hand, his face turned upwards.

This detail is fundamental.

From a symbolic point of view, he represents the conscience that stops manipulating the situation and exposes itself to the truth. It is the modern equivalent of the Jātaka Bodhisatta-fish.

The flood and the submerged meeting room

The office is flooded. This is not just a dramatic effect. In Jungian terms, water almost always represents the unconscious. Here the company is literally immersed in water:

collective fears;

economic anxieties;

survival instincts;

internal rivalries.

The financial crisis is not just an economic crisis. It is a psychic crisis. The image suggests that the real problem is not the lack of money, but the flooding of the organization by the Shadow Broker.

The dark figures on the margins

On the right and left appear individuals who whisper and plot. They are the "internal predators" evoked in the text. Jung would have seen in them a personification of the collective Shadow:

opportunism;

control research;

exploitation of fear.

The interesting aspect is that these characters do not take center stage. They are present but peripheral. The image suggests that psychological evil does not really dominate the situation; it dominates only when no one sheds light on the truth.

The fish that emerges from the mud

The most powerful part is probably the large golden fish that jumps out of the murky water. It simultaneously connects three levels:

1. the Maccha-Jātaka;

2. Jungian psychology;

3. the apophatic dimension.

In the Buddhist story, the fish emerges and proclaims a truth that recalls rain. In Jungian reading, the fish is an ancient symbol of the Self that emerges from the unconscious. In the apophatic perspective, fish represents something that cannot be produced voluntarily.

He does not "decide" to emerge.

It emerges.

As an intuition emerges.

As a confession emerges.

As a revelation emerges.

The face of Jung

The image of Carl Gustav Jung appears as a contemplative presence. He is not represented as a teacher who teaches. He seems rather a witness. The quote:

"The Shadow is not only the evil we do, but also the good we dare not express."

becomes the interpretative key of the entire scene.

We normally think of the Shadow as what we repress because it is unacceptable. Here, however, something more subtle is suggested: many people repress their goodness.

They repress:

courage;

generosity;

sincerity;

vulnerability.

The central employee breaks this repression.

The archetype of the Self

In the upper right part appears the word "SELF". This element takes on an almost mandalic function. In Jungian psychology, the Self does not coincide with the ego. The ego wants to save itself. The Self wants integration. The man who gives up part of his salary does not act out of convenience. It acts in accordance with a larger whole. For this reason, the image connects it directly to the archetype of the Self. He is not winning against someone. It is restoring a lost proportion.

The rain

The central phrase, "When truth emerges, rain falls." is the spiritual heart of the image. Rain is not a moral reward. Neither in the Jātaka nor in the apophatic reading is rain a transaction.

It doesn't mean, "If you tell the truth you'll be rewarded."

Rather, it means, "When reality is recognized defenselessly, something starts flowing again."

Rain is the symbol of the return of vital circulation.

It can manifest as:

healing;

creativity;

trust;

reconciliation;

intuition.

The analyst's room

In the lower right section we see a more intimate scene. A man bent over in pain in front of an analyst. Here the image establishes a surprising bridge: the same dynamic that saves the company also saves the individual psyche. After months of exploring the Shadow, the patient finally speaks a truth. At that moment something melts. Water droplets, tears and glowing icons suggest that transformation does not come from a technique. It is born from an act of authenticity.

Apophatic reading

The deepest aspect of the image is perhaps the least visible. The composition seems to tell a story of cause and effect:

1. the truth emerges;

2. The rain is coming.

But the apophatic dimension subverts this interpretation. There is no technique to cause rain. There is no formula. There is no guaranteed method. The truth that saves is not a strategy. It is a dropping of strategies. This is why the protagonist looks upwards. It does not check the outcome. It simply testifies to what is.

Final symbolic synthesis

The image can be read as a contemporary parable of awakening:

the mud is the collective unconscious;

predators are the dynamics of the Shadow;

the company is the human community;

the fish is the Self that emerges;

confession is the act of truth;

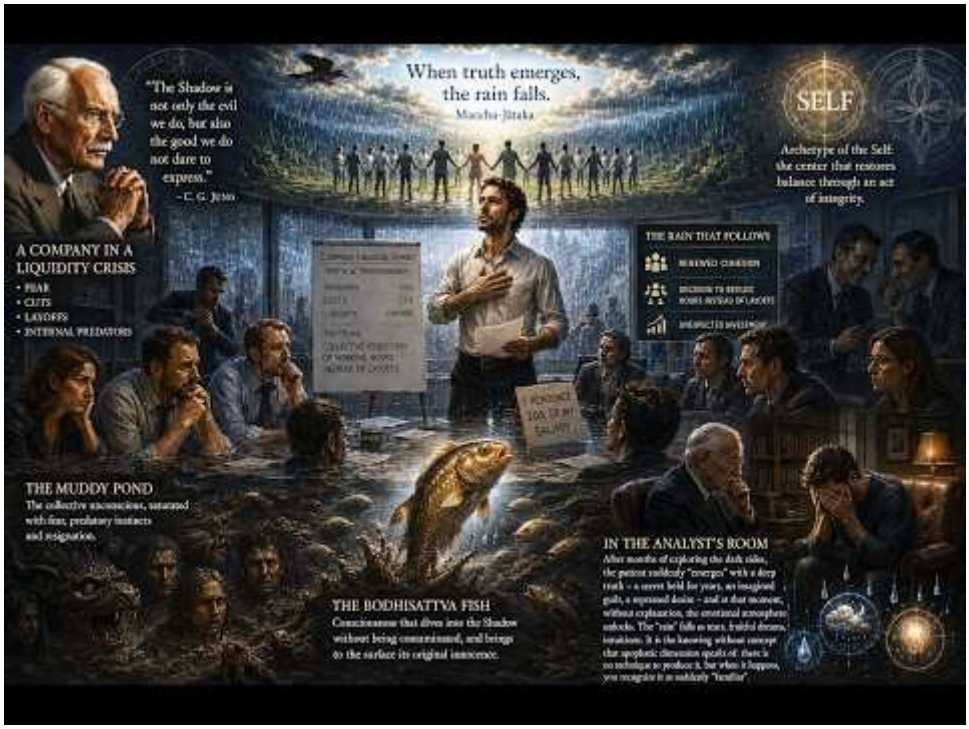
rain is the non-programmable grace;

Jung is the witness of transformation;

The apophatic dimension is the mysterious space in which healing takes place without being able to be produced.

In this perspective, the true miracle of Maccha-Jātaka is not rain. The miracle is that someone, immersed in the mud of collective fear, finds the courage to tell the truth without knowing what will happen next.

Video: https://youtu.be/DgaPECQ3if4


"The Shadow is not only the evil we do, but also the good we do not dare to express."
– C. G. Jung
When truth emerges, the rain falls.
Maccha-Jātaka
SELF
Archetype of the Self: the center that restores balance through an act of integrity.
A COMPANY IN A LIQUIDITY CRISIS
• FEAR
• CUTS
• LAYOFFS
• INTERNAL PREDATORS
THE RAIN THAT FOLLOWS
THE MUDDY POND
The collective unconscious, saturated with fear, predatory instincts and resignation.
THE BODHISATTVA FISH
Consciousness that dives into the Shadow without being contaminated, and brings to the surface its original innocence.
IN THE ANALYST'S ROOM

Carousel Table – 75. Maccha-Jātaka with Jungian integration

	Slide Title	Scene / Visual Description	Narrative anecdote (Jātaka 75)	Jungian Reference / Psychological Anecdote
1	**The great thirst**	A parched landscape under a leaden sky. The Jetavana pond is an expanse of cracked mud. Crows and hawks peck at agonizing fish.	Drought grips Kosala; the Buddha observes the suffering of aquatic creatures and decides to intervene.	The dryness of the psyche when the libido recedes. The collective Shadow emerges in the form of internal predators (obsessive thoughts, inner critics).
2	**The jewel in the mud**	Close-up of a huge fish that rips through the mud and emerges: the scales as dark as sandalwood sprinkled with eye drops, the bright ruby eyes that scan the sky.	The fish bodhisatta comes out of hiding and exposes himself to danger, ready to proclaim his truth.	The archetype of the Self that emerges from the unconscious. The process of individuation: what was buried in the shadows reveals itself as treasure.

Slide	Title	Scene / Visual Description	Narrative anecdote (Jātaka 75)	Jungian Reference / Psychological Anecdote
3	**The word that orders the sky**	The fish turns its gaze upwards and a beam of light seems to connect its eyes to the clouds. A distant thunder ripples the air.	"Pajjunna, thunder! Defeat the raven!" With the strength of the profession of truth, the fish calls for rain.	The word as a synchronistic act: when inner integrity is expressed, the external world responds. The Logos that reorders chaos.
4	**The renewing rain**	Torrents of water pour over the pond, the level rises to the last steps, the fish dart free. The Buddha immerses himself in the clear water.	Rain falls uninterrupted until it fills Lake Jetavana. Everyone is freed from fear and death.	Rain as a symbol of psychic renewal: vital energies (libido) begin to flow again after the depressive stalemate. The Self restores cosmic balance.

The apophatic dimension

The Maccha-Jātaka does not explain how the truth of a fish can command rain. It does not provide a mechanism or a theology: it simply narrates, and in narrating it preserves the mystery. The connection between the purity of the heart and the roaring of the sky remains unspeakable – it is knowledge without a concept. The text does not lend itself to a psychological reduction ("the placebo effect of sincerity") or to a rationalizing metaphysics ("the god of rain obeys a cosmic law"). Rather, it opens up a space in which the listener experiences a sudden resonance: something in him recognizes the scene as "familiar," not because he understands it intellectually, but because it is silent and resonates with the interior.

It is the same logic as the *sacca-kiriya*: truth does not need demonstration, it *is* its own demonstration. The story preserves this paradox and delivers it intact to the reader, like a sandalwood casket that should not be opened with analysis, but welcomed with silence. Only then, perhaps, does the rain fall.

Video: https://youtu.be/01eARXgYJTE

76. Asaṃkiya-jātaka

– A awake hermit saves a caravan from plunder.

Scene: The hermit warns the merchants of the brigands, unmasking the deception.

Everyday life: Mindfulness that prevents disasters.

Jung: Attention as a transcendent function that illuminates danger before it becomes real.

Synopsis of the plot

A devout layman, during a trip with a caravan, practices walking meditation at the foot of a tree while everyone is sleeping. Five hundred brigands surround the camp, but seeing him awake, they postpone the assault, waiting in vain for him to fall asleep. He keeps watch all night and the thieves, at dawn, leave. Returning to the Buddha, man learns that by protecting oneself one protects others. The Buddha then tells a story of the past: an ascetic (the Bodhisatta), traveling with a caravan, keeps vigil in meditation. The brigands mistake him for a sentinel, they wait, but he never sleeps. At dawn they throw down their weapons and flee. When questioned, the ascetic explains that he is not afraid: he is poor, nothing can be taken away from him; He has won inner peace through love and renunciation.

Dramatic Structure

- Characters: The Bodhisatta (ascetic), the merchants of the caravan, the five hundred thieves.

- Conflict: The predatory greed of brigands against the safety of the caravan.

- Turning point: Thieves, instead of attacking, wait for the ascetic to sleep. The wait lasts for the whole night. The external immobility of the ambush clashes with the inner immobility of wakefulness.

- Outcome: Thieves abandon weapons and purposes. The ascetic reveals the root of his invulnerability: not a weapon, but the absence of attachment. The caravan is saved by an act of pure presence.

Explicit teaching

By protecting yourself with awareness, you automatically protect others. Fear arises from attachment to material goods; Those who have achieved inner peace through love and charity are safe in any place, be it a village or a forest.

Implicit teaching

True protection is not a strategy, but a state of being. The ascetic does not stand guard: he simply does not sleep. His vigil is not anxious alert, but meditative presence. Non-action (not trying to fight the thieves) dissolves the threat. Voluntary poverty is not destitution, but an invisible fortress: thieves cannot steal what has already been renounced. The "night" is the metaphor of collective unconsciousness: the ascetic is the point of light that prevents the shadow from swallowing the field.

Relationship to the essay and levels

This Jātaka closes Level I – The Ethical Foundation, dedicated to the gestures that weave the world. Like the other stories of this cycle (gratitude, union, sacrifice), it shows a value – awareness – embodied in daily action. It corresponds to the Jungian "Person" in its noblest sense: not a social mask, but an external discipline that reflects a solid inner center. Attention becomes the primordial ethical gesture.

Bridge to Level II – The Shadow and its Double:

The five hundred thieves, lurking in the dark with stones and sticks, are a perfect image of the collective Shadow: greed, violence, waiting for the moment of weakness (the sleep of conscience). The ascetic does not face them, he does not preach them, he does not fight them. He simply illuminates them with his constant presence. When consciousness is steady, the shadow loses its grip and dissolves on its own, throwing away its weapons. The Jātaka suggests that the first move to deal with vice is not to attack it, but not to offer it the foothold of unconsciousness. It is the seed of the next level: unmasking the masks of vice not by force, but by the light of wakefulness.

Exciting anecdotes: Jung and everyday life

– The transcendent function as sentinel

Jung tells of a patient obsessed with the fear of being attacked or robbed, both physically and psychologically. Rational reassurances were not needed. The turning point came when the patient, during a dream, saw himself as a night watchman who, instead of brandishing a weapon, kept a lantern burning. He understood that the fear ceased when he stopped "defending" his possessions (ideas, status, memories) and simply began to "illuminate" the field of his consciousness. The ascetic of the Jātaka is that lantern: he does not protect a perimeter, but dissolves the shadow by the simple fact of being awake. The Jungian transcendent function operates like this: it does not resolve the conflict at the level of opposites (us against them), but generates a third symbolic state (wakefulness) that transforms the situation.

The image is a cinematic frame in 16:9 format, set in an alley or night courtyard of an ancient Italian village, which captures a suspended atmosphere steeped in mystery.

1. The Protagonist: At the center of the scene is a middle-aged man, dressed as an old-fashioned "night watchman": he wears a navy blue heavy wool coat, canvas trousers and a coppola cap. His appearance is ordinary, like a "man in the street," respecting the idea of a setting in everyday life. His posture is firm, calm and resolute. He does not wield a weapon; on the contrary, his only tool is a brass and glass lantern, lit, which he holds firmly in his hand.

2. The Lantern and the Illumination: The lantern gives off a warm, golden light that illuminates his footsteps and the stone wall to his right, casting a cone of clarity onto the cobbled floor. This light is the focus of the image, in stark contrast to the surrounding darkness.

3. The Shadow and the Danger: To the left of the man, in the deepest shadow of the alley, you can see some confused and dark, almost indistinct figures: an animal and a crouching figure. These represent the "shadows" and fears of the patient (the aggressors or thieves, physical and psychological). Man does not look at these figures or face them directly, but simply proceeds along his enlightened path.

4. The Setting: The alley is narrow, with ancient and worn stone walls, an arched porch that opens onto an interior garden with vines, and an old wooden door to the right. The architectural structure itself creates a sense of closure and intimacy, an "inside" of consciousness rather than a vast open space.

Analysis and Commentary

The Unarmed "Sentinel": The guardian is not a soldier defending a perimeter; He is a man who brings light. His presence is not aggressive, but testimonial. This perfectly captures the turning point of the patient's

dream: fear disappears not when you defend yourself with weapons (the opposites: defender vs. aggressor), but when you stop "defending" and start "illuminating".

The Transcendent Function and the Vigil: The light of the lantern does not "resolve" the conflict by eliminating the shadows, but dissolves them the moment it touches them. Man is not fighting dark figures; He is simply "walking in his truth." The lantern is the "transcendent function": a third symbolic state (wakefulness, vigilant consciousness) that transforms the situation, allowing the patient to see the shadow without being consumed by it.

The Jātaka Ascetic: The image blends the figure of the Jungian night watchman with the ideal of the Jātaka ascetic. The ascetic is the one who is "awake" (the Awakened One, or Buddha), and his mere presence is a lantern that dispels the darkness of ignorance. There is no need to fight against the outside world; it is enough to "illuminate" one's field of consciousness, one's inner courtyard. The image represents this synthesis with great elegance, blending an Italian everyday context with a mystical depth.

In conclusion, the image is an excellent interpretation of the prompt, capable of evoking the feeling of a moment of profound inner transformation through a coherent and pregnant visual aesthetic. It is the visual representation of how simple awareness, "keeping a lantern burning," is the key to breaking free from the prisons of our fears.

– The manager who does not react

During a tense company meeting, a manager is verbally attacked by a colleague with unfair accusations. The room is silent, everyone expects a defensive reaction. The manager, on the other hand, breathes, remains silent for a few seconds, then calmly says: "I feel your frustration. Let's look at the data together". The aggressiveness of the colleague, deprived of a reactive target, deflates. There was no struggle, no surrender, only a non-reactive presence. The manager "kept watch" while the other tried to "plunder" his reputation. Mindfulness has prevented relational disaster just as the ascetic prevents plunder: doing nothing but remaining present to himself.

The image is a realistic photograph set in a modern corporate meeting room. The scene is dominated by a long polished wooden table around which about a dozen professionals are seated. The atmosphere is clearly tense. At the center of the action are two men, strategically positioned on either side of the table. The man on the right, representing the aggressive colleague, is a middle-aged black man in a dark blue jacket. He is leaning forward, his body outstretched and his right hand raised and open in an expressive and accusatory gesture, his face tense and his mouth open as if he were speaking loudly and vehemently. His gaze is fixed on the man on the left.

The man on the left, representing the manager, is a middle-aged white man with gray hair, wearing a softer gray jacket. He is sitting composedly, his hands calmly intertwined on the table, his body relaxed. His face is serene, almost impassive, and his gaze is straight and calm towards the attacker, neither defensive nor aggressive. This posture contrasts sharply with that of his right-wing colleague.

Around them, the other participants in the meeting show different reactions, which reflect the tension of the scene. Some look at the attacker with bewilderment or surprise (like the blonde woman in the background), others look at the manager with apprehension or curiosity (like the man with the beard next to the attacker). In the background, a projector displays a "Quarterly Review" chart, providing business context. The lighting is natural, coming from large windows on the left and soft interior lights, which create an evening or late-afternoon atmosphere.

The image faithfully respects all the key elements of the prompt:

Context: The setting is a tense corporate meeting room. The image perfectly captures this moment of "tense company meeting". The presence of the projector with the graph of the results and the layout of the table create a realistic professional environment.

Conflict: A manager is verbally attacked. The aggressiveness of the right-hand colleague is made evident by his body posture, hand gesture and facial expression, which communicates a verbal attack in progress. The "unjust" accusation is implicit in the general tension and the bewildered reaction of the other participants.

Reaction: The manager who "doesn't react". This is the core of the prompt and has been rendered to great effect. The posture of the manager on the left (hands intertwined, calm expression, relaxed body) perfectly embodies the description of the prompt: "breathe, be silent for a few seconds, then calmly say, 'I feel your frustration. Let's look at the data together'". His "non-reactive presence" is palpable.

Effect: "The aggressiveness of the colleague, deprived of a reactive target, deflates". The image captures the moment of the attack, but the reaction of the manager on the left (or the lack of defensive reaction) implicitly suggests that the attack will not find fertile ground. Tension is in the air, but the manager's calm heralds the "deflation" of aggression.

Character Analysis and Metaphor: The image translates the central metaphor of the prompt into visual terms. The manager is "alert", present to himself, just like an ascetic who does not get involved in the temptation of combat. The attacker, on the other hand, tries to "plunder" his reputation, but his energy is dispersed in the face of the manager's barrier of awareness and composure. The presence of the other participants, who observe with various expressions, amplifies the effect of the scene, making it a "microcosm" of relational dynamics.

The generated image is an example of how AI can effectively translate abstract and psychological concepts (such as "non-reactive presence", "awareness", the "apophatic dimension" implicit in non-doing) into a concrete visual narrative. The choice to place the two protagonists on opposite sides of the table, with the manager in the visual center and the aggressor on one side, creates a dynamic balance and focuses attention

on their interaction. The attention to detail (the expressions of the other participants, the business context) makes the scene believable and engaging. The image not only describes, but communicates the essence of the anecdote, making tangible the power of awareness and silence as tools for conflict resolution. It is an image that "shows" rather than "tells", fully realizing the narrative and metaphorical intent of the prompt.

Carousel Table: 76. Asaṃkiya-jātaka with Jungian integration

Slide	Title	Scene / Visual Description	Narrative anecdote (Jātaka 76)	Jungian Reference / Psychological Anecdote
1	**The Vigil in the Night**	A lonely man walks slowly at the foot of a tree, under a starry sky. Around, wagons and merchants asleep. His face is serene, his gaze turned inwards.	The ascetic (the Bodhisatta) does not sleep: he enjoys the "bliss of the Deep Vision" while the caravan rests. The thieves, hidden, observe him.	Wakefulness as a "transcendent function": attention is not tension, but a symbolic state that unites conscious and unconscious, preventing the irruption of shadow.
2	**The Shadow That Flees at Dawn**	The first light of dawn. Five hundred figures in the darkness throw sticks and stones to the ground. They run away into the trees, with frustrated and almost relieved expressions.	At dawn, the thieves lay down their weapons and shout to the caravan: "If it hadn't been for the ascetic, we would have plundered you! Celebrate him tomorrow!".	The Jungian Shadow cannot operate without the grip of unconsciousness. When the light of consciousness is constant, the Shadow disarms itself. Projection: the thieves see in the ascetic an "enemy-sentinel", but he is only a witness.
3	**The Void Room**	The ascetic sits motionless. Nothing is seen around him: neither weapons nor possessions. The merchants, frightened, crowd around him; He is a center of absolute quiet.	"I wasn't afraid. Fear is for the rich. I have no property. I have overcome the perfect way of salvation out of love and charity." Peace in the cities, peace in the forests.	The Jungian Persona here is the absence of a mask: the ascetic does not represent a role, he embodies a void. It is the Self that speaks through voluntary poverty. He does not defend because he has nothing to defend.

The apophatic dimension: guarding the mystery of non-fear

The Jātaka does not technically explain how one attains the perfect way to salvation. The text does not list passages, precepts, nor does it describe meditation. He only says: "I conquered it with love and charity". It is a statement, not a method. The central phenomenon – the total absence of fear – is not analyzed, but preserved in the story.

This is the apophatic heart. The non-fear of the ascetic does not derive from psychological courage (facing danger), nor from a metaphysical calculation (a God protects me), but from an unspeakable condition: being destitute, empty of attachment. This emptiness is so full of a self-generated peace that it becomes an impenetrable fortress, not because it erects walls, but because it offers no footholds.

The mystery is this: the salvation of others (the caravan) takes place as a side effect, not intentional. The ascetic does not want to save anyone; simply, it is. His presence, which is silent, resonates in the interiority of the thieves as an insurmountable obstacle, not physical but ontological.

When we read history, something is silent and resonates in us simultaneously. We do not understand the mechanism with the rational mind, but we recognize it in a suddenly "familiar" way. It is the recognition that the greatest protection is not a strategy, but an undivided state of consciousness. This is knowledge without concept: an echo of our original waking nature, buried under the riches (fears, desires, roles) that we accumulate in the sleep of ordinary life.

Video: https://youtu.be/Wgaa0tIfTRw

Level II – The Shadow and its Double: Unmasking the Masks of Vice

Here appear the distorted faces of greed, pride, intoxication and corruption. It is the realm of the Jungian Shadow, where evil is not an "other" but an inner double to be recognized and transformed. The cure passes through a shock, a mirror that reflects the exact semblance of the vice.

79. Kharassara-jātaka

A village chief instigates thieves to steal the king's taxes.

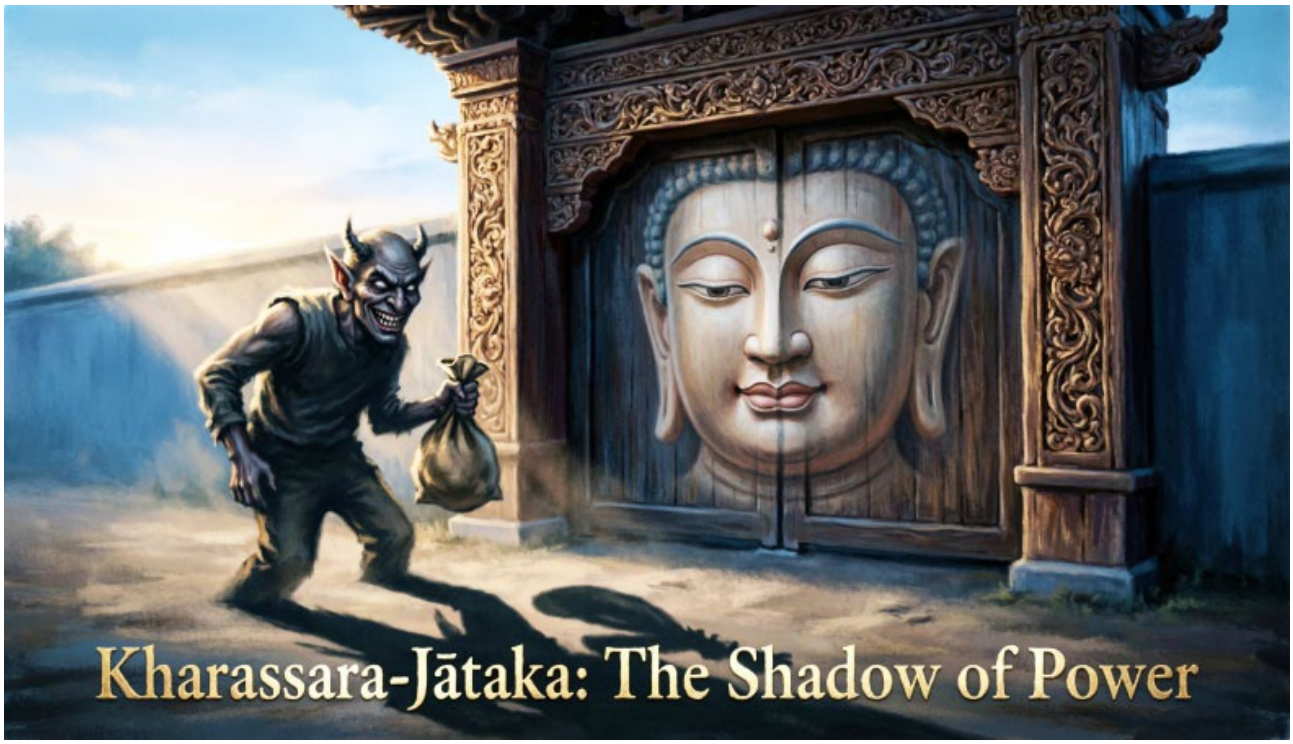
Scene: The authority becomes an accomplice in the theft under the appearance of legality.

Daily life: The corruption that lurks where justice should reign.

Jung: The dark side of power, the shadow of the collective Self.

1. Synopsis of the Plot

A minister, who has become the village chief of a border town, hatches a corrupt plan with a gang of thieves. After collecting the royal taxes, he leads his men into the jungle under a pretext, leaving the village defenseless. Thieves loot the village, steal cattle and flee. In the evening, the village chief returns to the sound of drums, pretending nothing happened. A merchant, the Bodhisatta, publicly exposes his hypocrisy with a verse declaring him dead as a son. His wickedness is eventually discovered, and the king punishes him. The Buddha reveals that the same corrupt disposition was already present in the minister's past life.



2. Dramatic Structure

- Characters:

  - The Village Chief (Minister): The antagonist, emblem of corrupt authority and the Shadow of Power. He is a "double" of himself: the protector of the village is its executioner.

  - The King: The supreme authority, initially deceived, but who eventually restores order.

  - The Thieves: The Shadow made manifest. They are the instrument of evil, but not its origin.

  - The Bodhisatta (Wise Merchant): The voice of critical conscience, the "mirror" that reflects vice. He is the one who sees and speaks the unspeakable.

- Conflict: The conflict is not between the village and the thieves, but between truth and falsehood, between the integrity of the being and the social mask of the village chief. The heart of the conflict is inner and radical: the real enemy is the one who pretends to defend.

- Turning point (Peripeteia): It is twofold. The first turning point is interior and social, marked by the Bodhisatta's song of condemnation, which tears the veil of hypocrisy with the force of the poetic word. The second turning point is the factual revelation of guilt and the consequent punishment by the king.

- Outcome: The restoration of an external order (punishment of the guilty) that follows an act of inner truth (denunciation). Evil is not defeated by force, but by its exposure to the light of awareness.

3. Explicit teaching

The text openly declares that wickedness and the disposition to corruption are not isolated events, but deep-rooted character traits that are repeated throughout lifetimes ("Sire, man has only shown the same disposition that he showed in days past"). The most severe sentence is reserved for those who betray a fundamental pact of trust: the village chief, declared "a son no more, because such a son is dead", has severed his ethical and social bond. Karmic retribution, though mediated by human justice, is inevitable.

4. Implicit Teaching

The implicit of the story is deeper and more disturbing. The real theft is not that of taxes, but the theft of trust, of the sacredness of the role of protector. The village chief robs not only the king, but the community and the cosmic order (Dhamma). His action is an ontological crime. The deadliest deception is the one that lurks in the very heart of the structure designed to guarantee security. His dissimulation – marching to the sound of drums like a winner – is the pathology of the Shadow that disguises itself as light. History shows that the real putrefaction does not come from the external "thieves", but from the secret alliance between the internalized shadow (the greed of the officer) and the social shadow (the criminals).

5. Relationship with the Sage and Level II – The Shadow and its Double

This Jātaka is the emblem of Level II of the sage. The Village Chief is the embodiment of the "double": he is not simply a thief, but the authority who becomes an accomplice in the theft under the guise of legality. His figure is a precise portrait of the Jungian Shadow of the collective Self, the dark side of power that betrays its archetypal function of protection and order.

The cure here passes for "a shock, a mirror that reflects the exact semblance of the vice". This mirror is the Bodhisatta, whose function is not to judge from above, but to name vice with a word that wounds and awakens. His verse is not a simple denunciation; it is a performative act that transforms the unveiling into a social and spiritual sentence. The village chief is symbolically "killed" ("such a son is dead") before being physically punished. This is the asceticism of the heart in the context of vice: the ability to distinguish the function from the corrupt person who occupies it, unmasking the shadow without destroying the archetype.

6. Compelling Anecdotes and Daily Life in a Jungian key

Jātaka 79 is a universal parable that describes systemic corruption in which the Shadow is not an external aggression, but an internal cancer that disguises itself as healthy tissue.

Anecdote 1: The Consultant Who Rides the Crisis.

A business consultant tasked with reviving a company in crisis secretly orchestrates or aggravates the crisis itself to make his expensive services indispensable. Like the village chief, he returns "with drums playing", presenting solutions for problems that he himself has fueled. His mask is that of the savior. Unmasking it means, for the company, recognizing that its shadow (fear, the desire for an easy solution) has evoked and legitimized an inner predator.

The image translates into visual language the symbolic core of the Kharassara-jātaka (79): corruption not as an enemy that comes from outside, but as a presence that grows within the system, taking the form of what should heal it.

The figure of the consultant on horseback dominates in the center. He is not represented as a simple professional, but as an almost mythological character: the white horse recalls the appearance of purity, competence and the savior who arrives to restore order. The confident posture, controlled smile and elevated position suggest a figure who is in control of the narrative.

But behind him appears a gigantic and dark presence: a sort of invisible puppeteer who moves strings over the scene. This element is fundamental in a Jungian key: it represents the Shadow, not necessarily absolute evil, but that unconscious part that guides unrecognized behaviors, desires and fears.

The consultant seems free, but in reality he is part of a larger mechanism.

Jungian analysis: the mask and the Shadow

The image stages two archetypes:

The Person

the elegant dress;

the safety of the consultant;

the promise of a solution;

the language of competence.

It is the social mask, what is shown to others.

The Shadow

the dark puppeteer;

destruction in the background;

economic chaos;

The manipulated crisis.

The deep dynamic is this: the consultant does not just sell a solution; sells the need for the solution. The crisis becomes his terrain of power.

As in Jātaka, the problem is not only the swindler, but the community that unconsciously wishes to believe in the savior. Fear generates dependence.

The Symbolism of the Horse

The white horse is an ambivalent symbol.

On the one hand, it recalls:

guide;

strength;

nobility;

transformation.

On the other hand, here it becomes a mount of illusion.

The consultant does not walk among people: he is above them. This suggests a distance from the day-to-day reality of the company. He dominates the story of the crisis.

The "savior" becomes the one who rides the problem he is supposed to solve.

The Division of the Background: Death and Promise

Left:

destroyed buildings;

falling charts;

dark atmosphere.

It is the crisis.

But the most interesting detail is that this destruction does not appear random: it seems constructed, almost orchestrated. The decline becomes a scenography.

Right:

bright city;

growing chart;

promise of rebirth.

It is the vision sold by the consultant.

The image thus shows the paradox: the one who produces darkness is also the one who sells the light.

Apophatic reading: what needs to be taken away

From a negative theology perspective, the image does not invite us to immediately find an external culprit. It invites us to remove illusions.

The apophatic question becomes:

"What is left when we take off the mask of the savior?"

Perhaps a more disturbing truth remains:

The system needed to believe the consultant because it didn't want to look at its own fragility.

The Shadow does not enter through the front door. She is invited because she promises what we want.

Connection with Kharassara-jātaka

The village of Jātaka is deceived by a figure who constructs a problem and then appears as the one who solves it.

The image updates this parable in the modern world:

the village becomes the company;

the village chief becomes the consultant;

the drums become presentations, reports, strategies and promises;

the spell becomes dependence on the external solution.

True healing is not simply driving out the manipulator.

It is recognizing the inner ground that made it possible.

Symbolic synthesis

The image tells:

"The most effective predator does not enter pretending to be an enemy. He comes in dressed as a medicine."

Jātaka 79 thus becomes a Jungian parable on the power of the Shadow: what is not recognized within us can return in the form of a savior.

Anecdote 2: The Activist and the Secret Agreement.

A leader of an environmental movement fighting a polluting industrial project secretly negotiates a lucrative consulting deal with the responsible company to "help them improve their public image." His public struggle is the ploy to bring "men into the jungle", leaving the field open to a compromise that betrays the cause. His Shadow is not the love of money itself, but the intoxication of power that comes from playing a double game. Jung reminds us that the Shadow of power lies not only in the accumulation of money, but in the identification with the mask (Person) of the righteous, which makes the individual blind to his own corruption. The Bodhisatta, in this case, could be a whistleblower or a journalist who, with an article, pronounces the "verse" that destroys his façade.

The image translates the core of Jātaka 79 – Kharassara-jātaka into visual form as a parable on the internal corruption of the human being, not as a simple opposition between "good" and "bad", but as a hidden fracture within the same identity.

The composition is constructed as a psychological triptych:

On the left appears the public dimension: a crowd, a forest, ecological symbols, an activist with a megaphone in front of the smoking factories. It is the world of the Jungian Person, the social mask: the role of the defender, the righteous, the savior.

In the center emerges the divided face: one half human and luminous, the other dark and almost consumed by organic matter. The broken mask represents the conflict between declared identity and repressed truth. The roots and plant forms that cross the body suggest an ambiguous image: nature that should be protected is also the place where the inner "rottenness" is hidden.

On the right appears the secret dimension: the meeting room, the agreement, the handshake with industrial power. The colder and more artificial light contrasts with the forest: the place where the cause becomes negotiation, where the language of justice can be transformed into an instrument of control.

At the bottom, the journalist/whistleblower with documents and photographs represents the role of the Bodhisatta: the one who does not destroy for revenge, but brings to light what was hidden.

Jungian analysis: the Shadow is not outside, it is inside

The image interprets well a central theme of Carl Gustav Jung: the Shadow is not simply the "bad" side of the individual, but what consciousness refuses to recognize.

The activist is not represented as a trivial hypocrite. The deepest point is another:

The same energy that fuels the struggle against power can become the desire to possess it.

Corruption does not necessarily arise from money, but from identification with the image of the "righteous".

The symbolic phrase of the image could be:

"When the mask of good becomes too perfect, the Shadow learns to wear it."

Connection with Kharassara-jātaka

In Jātaka, the narrative structure shows a typical dynamic:

something appears pure and reliable;

a hidden interest is at work beneath the surface;

the community is deceived by the external form;

Truth emerges through a revelation.

The image renders this through the metaphor of the jungle and the industrial city:

The jungle is not only a natural place to be defended; it also becomes the symbol of the unexplored psyche, where hidden impulses live.

The "monster" does not come from the outside: it grows in the roots of identity itself.

Apophatic reading: taking away what we think we are

From the point of view of negative theology, the image can be read as an invitation to dispossession:

He does not ask, "Who is the righteous one?"

but:

"What's left when all our images of purity fall away?"

The secret agreement is the moment in which the subject discovers that even his own ideal can become an idol.

The apophase would say:

you are not your reputation;

you are not your role;

you are not your cause;

You are not your mask.

Only when the mask falls off can a deeper truth emerge.

Final symbolism: the journalist as a figure of awakening

The figure at the bottom right is fundamental: it does not represent judgment, but revelation.

The "verse" of the Bodhisatta in the Jātaka becomes here:

a document,

a photograph,

A testimony.

He does not fight the Shadow with another Shadow; it simply illuminates what was hidden.

True liberation is not winning against the external enemy, but recognizing the inner enemy before it becomes a new mask.

In this sense, the image is a visual representation of the theme:

"The cancer of the system is not only corrupt power; it is the part of us that desires to be seen as pure as we learn to inhabit power."

7. Carousel Table: 79. Kharassara-jātaka

Slide	Slide Title	Scene / Visual Description	Narrative anecdote (Jātaka 79)	Jungian Reference / Psychological Anecdote
1	**The Covenant in the Shadows**	An officer in elegant clothes whispers to a group of hooded figures at the entrance to a dark cave. His hands are outstretched: one points to the village below, the other is open to receive a bag of coins.	"After collecting the taxes, the village chief secretly agreed with the thieves: 'I will take you out, leaving you the village to plunder, as long as you give me half of the spoils.'"	**The Corrupted Unconscious:** The Inner Shadow Pact. The ego (the village chief) does not repress the predatory impulse, but consciously integrates it and directs it, becoming an accomplice to it. It is not a possession, it is a strategy.
2	**The Hypocrite's Triumphal March**	The village is on fire and devastated. In the foreground, the village chief marches boldly at the head of his soldiers, with drums and banners. His face has an expression of feigned concern and solemn innocence.	"At dusk, when the place was already plundered, he returned with his men to the sound of drums, feigning a blissful ignorance of what had happened."	**The Person as the Fortress of Vice.** The mask (Persona) of the loyal official is so perfect that it becomes armor for the Shadow. The sound of the drum is not a sign of victory, but the din that covers the silence of conscience. A businessman presents a triumphant cost-cutting report after secretly firing whistleblowers of his fraud.
3	**The Voice That Tears the Veil**	A merchant (the Bodhisatta) is standing, alone, in front of the triumphal march. He has no weapons, but his mouth is open in a song. A light radiates	"The Bodhisatta exclaimed: 'He has given time to thieves to steal cattle, burn houses, capture people; and now he comes back marching with the	**The Shock of Recognition.** It is the intervention of the transcendent function. The Bodhisatta does not fight the Shadow, he appoints it. His verse is a mirror that forces the Person to see the monster behind him. "You

	Slide Title	Scene / Visual Description	Narrative anecdote (Jātaka 79)	Jungian Reference / Psychological Anecdote
		from his words that illuminates the scene, making the village chief appear like a masked demon.	drums! A son no more, for such a son is dead.'"	are not solving the problem. She is the problem".
4	**The Death of the Son (Disidentification)**	An honorific statue of the village chief in the village square is torn down. The image fragments, and the pieces of the mask fall to the ground, revealing not a face underneath, but a dark void.	"Not long after, the wickedness was discovered, and the scoundrel was punished by the king as his wickedness deserved. ' This is not the first instance, Sire, in which he has shown this disposition.'"	**The Disintegration of Identification.** External punishment is secondary. The true Jungian catharsis is the "death of the son" proclaimed by the Bodhisatta: the breaking of the bond of identification between the collective Self and the corrupt individual. The archetype of the Leader remains; its false representative is annihilated.

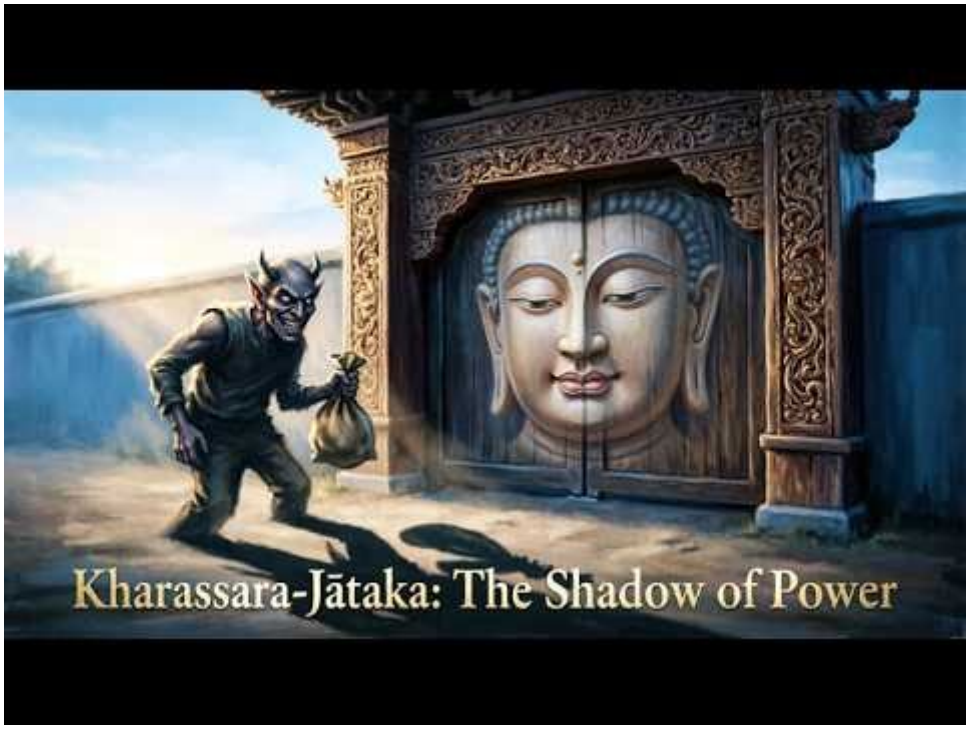
8. The apophatic dimension

Jātaka 79 does not explain corruption, it does not make it a psychology or a sociology. He guards it as a mystery of iniquity. The Bodhisatta verse is not an analysis, but an ethical kōan. How can a child "die" while he is alive, if not because he has betrayed his most intimate nature?

The account indicates that the core of wickedness is unspeakable, not because it is too horrible to express, but because its essence is a radical absence, a void of being masquerading as full authority. When the Bodhisatta chants, he is not offering an explanation, but generating a space of resonance. The phrase "such a son is dead" is paradoxical and definitive. It leaves no room for negotiation. Its impact does not come from reasoning, but from a sudden, familiar certainty that resonates in the inner life of the listener. It is knowledge without a concept: everyone knows immediately what he means.

Apophatic asceticism here is the process of radical stripping away: one does not simply deny that the village chief is good; his very existence as a "son", as an authentic member of the social and spiritual body, is denied. The ineffable mystery guarded is that evil, in the end, is not a substance but a betrayal, an alliance with the absence of self which, when brought to light in poetic language, vanishes like fog, leaving the culprit exposed in his naked ethical irrelevance. The silence after the verse is more eloquent than a thousand treatises on justice.

Video: https://youtu.be/M67_HkOhf0k



80. Bhīmasena-jātaka

A valiant dwarf and a cowardly giant.

Scene: The dwarf performs the feats, the giant gets the credit until fear unmasks his true stature.

Daily life: Appearances can be deceiving; The credit goes to the heart, not to the façade.

Jung: The Person (the giant) who collapses when the Shadow and authentic courage (the dwarf) emerge.

Synopsis of the plot

The Bodhisatta is reborn as a crippled and sagacious little Brahmin, known as the "Wise Little Archer". To earn a living, he chooses a gigantic weaver named Bhīmasena as his "cover image": the giant pretends to be a great archer in the service of the king of Benares, while the dwarf performs every feat behind the scenes. With cunning, the dwarf instructs Bhīmasena on how to pretend to be the killer of a tiger and a buffalo infests. The giant, covered with honors and riches, mounts in pride and denies the dwarf. However, when the kingdom is attacked by an enemy king, Bhīmasena, armed and on a war elephant, he trembles with fear and gets dirty on himself. The Wise Little Archer saves him, sends him home, then alone breaks into the enemy camp, captures the opposing king and brings victory. Bhīmasena is dismissed, the dwarf is filled with honors. The lesson: appearances can be deceiving, the merit goes to the heart and not to the façade.

Dramatic Structure

- Main characters:

  - Wise Little Archer (Bodhisatta): dwarf, wise, skilled archer, strategist.

  - Bhīmasena: giant weaver, boastful, coward.

  - King of Benares: look for warriors, reward appearances.

- Conflict: The dwarf's need to hide his deformed body pushes him to create a public "Persona" (Bhīmasena) who collects undeserved fame. The conflict is internalized when the giant, swollen with pride, refuses the dwarf's guidance, believing himself authentically valiant.

- Turning point: The declaration of war; Bhīmasena, put to the real test, loses all control, staining himself with fear on the battlefield. The dwarf unmasks his true stature with a verse of mockery.

- Outcome: The dwarf fights alone and wins, becoming famous. Bhīmasena is unmasked and sent back to his loom. Order is restored: appearance yields to substance.

Explicit teaching

The story openly declares that boasting of non-existent qualities is a lie destined to collapse. The Buddha, in the frame, condemns his boastful brother: "This is not the first time he goes around boasting; even in the past he boasted and deceived people." The explicit moral is that boasting is vacuous and that true value emerges from action, not from words or size.

Implicit teaching

Thinner layers emerge:

- The dwarf, despite being physically "inferior", possesses authentic mastery. He is a figure of Positive Shadow – skill, intelligence, courage – hidden behind the façade of the giant.

- The giant is the Person (social mask) who, inflated by recognition, identifies with it and denies hidden help, falling into the void when put to the test.

- Wisdom does not lie in appearing, but in knowing how to be "behind the scenes" when needed and leap to the forefront only in the truth of the decisive act.

- The initial deception is not condemned as immoral: the dwarf uses cunning to survive, but never identifies with the mask. The bane of Bhīmasena is the identification with the Person that erases the awareness of the limit.

- Implicitly, the Jātaka shows that the authentic self can go through humiliation (being a "dwarf pageboy") to emerge transfigured.

Relationship with the Sage and Level II

The Jātaka 80 is part of Level II: The Shadow and its Double: Unmasking the Masks of Vice. Here the distortions of pride and inebriation appear. Bhīmasena embodies the giant whose Persona collapses when the Shadow and authentic courage (the dwarf) emerge. The essay "Beyond the Name, the Dream and the Door" reads these Jātaka as stages of an asceticism of the heart: the dwarf is the one who, going beyond the name (fame) and the dream (identification with the mask), makes the leap of awareness. The dwarf acts as the giant's inner "double": the shadow is the true center of force, which the Person tries to dominate but which, if recognized and integrated, leads to inner victory.

Jungian anecdotes and daily life

- The manager and the ghostwriter:

a charismatic senior leader (Bhīmasena) takes credit for the brilliant ideas of his shadow, introverted assistant (the dwarf). The company celebrates him; He swells with pride, refuses the assistant's advice. At the moment of a crucial negotiation, he panics, mumbles incorrect data and risks failure. The assistant corrects him live, unmasking his incompetence. Jung would say: the Person of the brilliant leader has swallowed the Shadow, but in the moment of stress the Shadow (true knowledge) breaks in and the inflated ego collapses.

The image functions as a very effective visual representation of the Bhīmasena-jātaka reinterpreted through Jung, the apophatic dimension and the theme of awakening. It is not just a corporate scene: it is a psychological parable about the false center of the ego.

In the center we find the manager: elegant, standing, enlightened, with open arms. Posture communicates dominance, security, social recognition. He is the character who "occupies the space": everyone looks at him, some applaud. Light favors it.

But this centrality is ambiguous: his face and his gesture seem almost a celebration of himself. It is the Jungian Person, the mask built for the world:

the brilliant leader;

the one who seems to have the vision;

the one to whom merits and intuitions are attributed.

Behind this image, however, the second character appears: the assistant.

He is sitting, sideways, lower, less visible. He receives no applause. It does not possess the symbolic power of the scene. Yet it indicates the decisive point: the graph, the data, the reality.

Here the reversal takes place.

Jungian Reading: The Person Who Devours the Shadow

The manager is not simply arrogant: he is someone who has totally identified himself with his own image.

His unconscious belief is:

"I am the one who knows."

But true knowledge has been projected outside him, into the assistant.

The assistant represents the positive Shadow: not the dark part in the moral sense, but what the Ego has removed because it is not compatible with its own image.

The Shadow here contains:

silent competence;

observation;

humility;

contact with the facts.

The manager has the prestige, but the assistant owns the reality.

The graph: the apophatic revelation

The most important detail is the screen with the graph dropdown.

The truth does not come as a new theory or a grand speech. It comes as a denial of the illusion.

This is an apophatic dynamic:

First we must remove what is false.

The leader builds a narrative:

"We are winning".

The graph answers:

"Look at what is".

Reality does not add a more beautiful image: it destroys the previous one.

It is similar to the negative theology movement:

The truth is not reached by eliminating error, emptying the false images of the self.

The spatial composition: the real center is hidden

The scene seems to say:

Who is at the center of the image is not necessarily the center of truth.

The manager occupies the visual center, but the assistant occupies the symbolic center.

This inversion is typical of revival stories:

the big turns out to be small;

the small contains wisdom;

the powerful depend on the one who ignored.

It is the same pattern as the dwarf of the Bhīmasena-jātaka: the apparent force is supported by an invisible presence.

Final comment: the moment before the collapse

The interesting thing is that the image does not yet show the complete fall.

Show the suspended instant:

The executive is still applauded, but the world is already changing.

This makes the scene feel deeper.

The real drama is not losing a negotiation.

The real drama is to discover that the identity built for years was based on an excluded part of oneself.

In terms of awakening:

The Shadow does not come to destroy the Ego. He arrives to free him from the prison of his own image.

The image therefore does not just tell of an unmasked garment: it tells of the passage from the "I" that wants to appear to the self that agrees to see.

- The bodybuilder on social media:

A gymnastic man publishes photos of a warrior, boasting strength and courage. One day, in a street fight, he freezes and pees on himself in fear, while a petite and silent friend confronts the attacker. The mirrored image on social media (Persona) collapses in the face of real fear; true courage (Positive Shadow) was in the "invisible" friend. Jungian work lies in recognizing that strength is not muscle but integration of one's vulnerability.

The image is constructed as a visual narrative divided into two worlds, almost like a psychological diptych.

On the left, the dimension of representation dominates: a very muscular man poses in the gym in front of a smartphone. His body is illuminated, sculpted, almost heroic. The phone screen repeats his image: it is the world of the Jungian Person, the social mask that the individual builds to be seen, admired and recognized.

Posture communicates control, security, dominance. But it is a mediated security: it exists within a protected environment, in front of a virtual audience.

On the right, the atmosphere changes radically: the street is dark, damp, real. The scene shows the confrontation with fear. The body that previously seemed invincible suddenly appears fragile. The gymnastic man is no longer a mythological warrior: he is a human being in front of the limit.

Next to him emerges an opposite figure: a smaller, silent man, without ostentation. He has no muscles to show nor a constructed identity. Its presence, however, communicates a different force: rooted, spontaneous, undeclared.

Jungian Analysis: Person and Shadow

The image represents very well the contrast between:

The Person

The bodybuilder on social media embodies the Person:

the self shown to others;

the controlled image;

the need to confirm an identity;

the confusion between appearing and being.

Its strength is real on the physical level, but psychologically incomplete because it depends on the external gaze.

The telephone becomes almost a modern mirror: it does not reflect the soul, it reflects a constructed image.

The Positive Shadow

The minute friend represents the Shadow in Jung's deepest sense: not only what we remove, but also those parts of us that we have not yet recognized.

The invisible man possesses qualities that the protagonist has repressed:

authentic courage;

presence;

ability to act without the need for approval;

acceptance of fear.

The hidden force exceeds the exhibited force.

Apophatic reading: the truth through the loss of the image

In an apophatic perspective, the image suggests that truth does not appear by adding something, but by removing illusions.

The protagonist loses:

the myth of the warrior;

the constructed identity;

the idea of being invulnerable.

And it is precisely this "fall" that opens up a space for transformation.

The failure of the Person becomes a threshold towards a deeper knowledge:

I'm not what I show, I'm not what others see, I'm not even my fear.

Connection with the Bhīmasena-jātaka

The reference to the Bhīmasena-jātaka is particularly interesting.

In the tradition of the Jātaka, Bhīmasena represents the theme of the apparent hero: the one who possesses an image of extraordinary strength, but who must confront the truth hidden behind the appearance.

The parallelism is:

the apparent giant → the bodybuilder of social media;

the strength exhibited → the Person;

the real proof → the moment of crisis;

silent strength → unrecognized wisdom.

True transformation occurs when the hero discovers that greatness does not consist in being feared, but in being whole.

Final symbolic comment

The image could be read as a modern icon of the path of awakening:

The muscle represents visible power.

Fear represents the human limit.

The silent friend represents the forgotten part of being.

The scene does not say that physical force is false; says something more subtle:

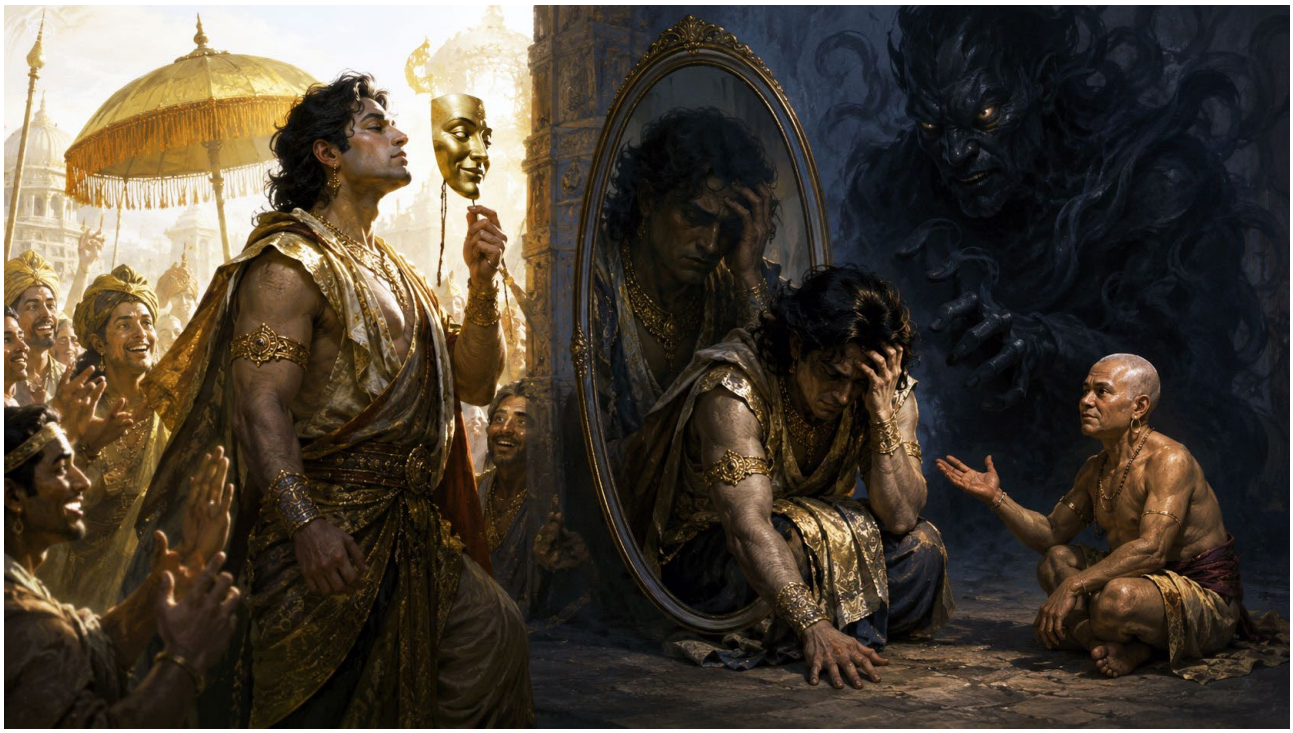
The force that has not met its vulnerability is still a mask.

The true warrior is not the one who is not afraid, but the one who has integrated his fear without being dominated by it.

In Jungian terms: the journey is not about becoming bigger in front of others, but about becoming whole within yourself.

- The "impostor syndrome" reversed:

the dwarf of the Jātaka does not suffer from impostor syndrome because he knows he is skilled; on the contrary, it is Bhīmasena who, enjoying undeserved fame, lives a real imposture. Today, many wear masks of competence, but when the Shadow (the fear of being exposed) presses, the psychic system succumbs in symptoms such as panic attacks or professional breakdowns. The Jātaka invites us to recognize the Shadow as an ally and not to identify with the mask.



The image is constructed as a symbolic representation of the inner fracture between appearance and truth, between the social mask and the hidden Shadow.

On the left, a luminous scene dominates: a man dressed in golden royal clothes is surrounded by a crowd celebrating him. Her posture is proud, almost theatrical: her body communicates security, success and power. He holds a golden mask in his hand, a central detail that suggests the theme of constructed identity.

A mirror appears in the center, but what it reflects is not a triumphant hero: it shows a bent, fatigued, tormented man. External glory and internal pain do not coincide.

On the right, the landscape changes radically: the light vanishes, a dark environment emerges where an almost demonic figure of Shadow looms. In front of this darkness sits a humble and bald figure, calm, who seems to offer to listen or teach.

Jungian analysis: the mask and the Shadow

The image looks like a visualization of the Jungian concept of Person and Shadow.

The regal figure represents the Person: the face we show to the world, the social role, the reputation, the need to be recognized.

The golden mask is significant: it is not simply a lie, because the Person is necessary in social life; The problem arises when the individual identifies himself completely with it.

The protagonist does not suffer because he is incapable: he suffers because he has built his identity on an image that he must continually maintain.

The mirror then becomes a symbol of the encounter with the hidden Self:

What man fears to see is not an external monster, but the part of himself that he has excluded.

Connection with the Bhīmasena-jātaka

The image interprets the heart of the anecdote well.

In the Jātaka, the paradox is reversed:

the dwarf does not experience an "impostor syndrome": he knows his real value;

Bhīmasena instead possesses fame and prestige that do not correspond to reality.

So the true impostor is not the one who appears small, but the one who wears a size that does not belong to him.

The crowd applauding in the scene represents precisely this collective illusion: external recognition becomes a prison.

Apophatic reading

From an apophatic perspective, the image suggests that truth does not arise from adding something to the self, but from removing superstructures.

The hidden question of the image is:

"Who are you when the mask drops?"

The face reflected in the mirror is not necessarily the true self: it is the breaking point where constructed identity meets emptiness.

The Dark Shadow does not appear as an enemy to be destroyed. It is a presence that asks for integration.

The meaning of the humble figure on the right

The figure seated next to the Shadow recalls the role of the master of awakening: he does not fight the demon, he does not flee from the night.

Simply state:

"Look."

It is a posture very close to inner transformation: the Shadow is not eliminated, it is recognized.

The fear of being unmasked — represented by the tormented figure — often arises when the ego tries to protect a fragile construction.

Final comment

The image tells of a sort of inner Apocalypse: a revelation (apokálypsis, "unveiling") not as destruction, but as the fall of the veil.

True awakening is not to become greater in the eyes of others, but to cease to be slaves to the image we must defend.

The dwarf of the Jātaka must not become larger.

It is Bhīmasena who must become more real.

Carousel Table: 80. Bhīmasena-jātaka with Jungian integration

Slide	Title	Scene / visual description	Narrative anecdote (Jātaka 80)	Jungian Reference / Psychological Anecdote
1	**The Giant's Mask**	A huge weaver posing as a hero in front of the king, behind him a tiny dwarf with a bow.	The dwarf chooses the giant Bhīmasena as his "public face", pretending to be his pageboy. The king hires the giant as an archer for 1000 coins per week.	**Person**: the social mask we wear to be accepted. Bhīmasena is the façade of strength, but the true self (the dwarf) stands behind.
2	**The Shadow Broker Acts in Secrecy**	The dwarf at night draws plans on a parchment, the giant sleeps blissfully.	The dwarf instructs Bhīmasena on how to fake the killing of the tiger: make the villagers gather, hide, then take credit. The giant executes.	**Positive shadow**: the hidden talent that works in the unconscious. The Shadow is not only the dark side, but the unexpressed potential.
3	**Swelling of the ego**	Bhīmasena on a golden throne, chases away with contempt the dwarf who had helped him.	Filled with honors and riches, the giant gets drunk on himself, insults the dwarf: "I can do without you. Do you believe that there is no man besides you?"	**Psychic inflation**: the Person swells to such an extent that the Ego identifies with it, denying the Shadow. The individual becomes prey to hubris.
4	**The collapse of the Person**	War elephant, Bhīmasena in armor trembling, the dwarf behind who holds him tied up so he doesn't fall.	In battle, to the sound of drums, Bhīmasena is terrified and "dirties the back of the elephant". The dwarf taunts him: "Before you pretended to be a warrior, now your feat is to defile the elephant".	**Descent of the Shadow/Enantiodromia**: the Person turns into his opposite. Fear, removed from identification with the strong, explodes into a bodily symptom.
5	**The True Self Enters the Field**	The little dwarf, armed, throws himself alone against the enemy army, with eyes of fire.	The dwarf brings Bhīmasena down, sends him to wash, then screams alone and breaks into the camp, captures the enemy king alive and takes him to Benares.	**Shadow Integration**: The authentic self (courage, skill) acts when the mask falls. The recognized Shadow becomes the force that fulfills destiny.
6	**The return to one's stature**	Bhīmasena returns to the loom, the wise dwarf is celebrated, but his face is serene, not puffed up.	The king heaps honors on the Wise Little Archer; The giant receives a reward and returns home, but the real fame belongs to the dwarf, who practices charity and good works until death.	**Individuation**: one no longer seeks the recognition of others; one fulfills one's duty from the center. True stature is not measured in height, but in authenticity.

Apophatic dimension

The Bhīmasena-jātaka does not conceptually explain the dynamic between appearance and substance, between dwarf and giant; he guards it in a narrative that operates like a mirror. The climax – the giant getting

dirty with fear – is not psychologized: it is shown in its raw physicality. History does not say "pride leads to fall" in the abstract, but shows the stench and trembling. Thus the mystery of courage and cowardice remains ineffable. The reader does not receive a lesson, but an experience: suddenly he recognizes within himself that trembling, that filth, and at the same time that silent force of the dwarf who, nameless, acts. It is a knowledge without a concept: something is silent and simultaneously resonates in the interior. The Jātaka does not reveal, but indicates, like an open door to the unspoken, where the true stature of the heart manifests itself not by definition, but by resonance. The Buddhist apophase lies in this: ultimate wisdom is never captured by the word "courage" or "humility", but shines through the plot like a perfume, letting each one recognize for himself, in silence, the shadow that is the door to the light.

Video: https://youtu.be/Rw8Yk8uf0e0

81. Surāpāna-jātaka

– The effects of the strong drink on hermits.

Scene: Sober ascetics give in to alcohol, losing virtue and awareness.

Daily life: Addictions that cloud the mind and destroy bonds.

Jung: Intoxication as a submersion of the unintegrated unconscious.

1. Plot synopsis

The story opens at the time of the Buddha, with the elderly Sāgata, a monk endowed with superhuman powers, defeating the terrifying Nāga of the Mango Ferry. The citizens of Kosambī, full of gratitude, want to honor him. When the monks were asked what would please an ascetic, some "evil" followers suggested pure liquor. The citizens invite Sāgata to lunch, house to house, skillfully offering him the liquor. The old man drinks until he is dizzy, collapses drunk at the city gate and is found by the Buddha in a state of confusion, unable even to recognize the Master. The Buddha thus establishes the rule against the use of intoxicating substances. To show that this is not an isolated event, the Master tells the past story: five hundred ascetics, disciples of the Bodhisatta, leave the master for the rainy season to go to Benares. The king, wishing to honor them with something rare for renunciants, offers them the best liquor. The ascetics, unaccustomed, get drunk, lose their minds, dance, sing and abandon themselves to chaos. Coming to their senses, they weep with shame, understand the seriousness of the gesture and return to the master, who lovingly admonishes them, reminding them that the absence of a guide leads to such falls.

2. Dramatic Structure

- Characters:

  - Present: The Buddha, the elder Sāgata (endowed with powers but still worldly), the citizens of Kosambī, the evil monks.

  - Past: The Bodhisatta (master), the five hundred ascetic disciples, the king of Benares.

- Conflict: The tension between ascetic identity (awareness, self-mastery) and the dissolving force of intoxication. It is not an external conflict, but a sudden and total inner surrender to the substance that "steals the senses".

- Turning point (vicissitude): The moment of collapse. Sāgata, the hero who tamed the nāga, lies prone and slurred, with his feet turned disrespectfully towards the Buddha. It is the visual and moral shock: spiritual power is nothing if it is not guarded by a sober daily ethic. In past history, waking up from intoxication and seeing the chaos generated is the turning point.

- Outcome: The institution of a monastic rule. On the karmic plane, the Bodhisatta's admonition brings ascetics back to the life of awareness. Healing is not punishment but realignment.

3. Explicit teaching

Alcohol and substances that "steal the senses" (surāmeraya-majja-pamādaṭṭhāna) are an insidious evil. Even those who possess great spiritual powers (Sāgata) or a life of austere virtue (the ascetics of the past) can be overwhelmed by them, totally losing control and dignity. The rule is clear: intoxication leads to the ruin of consciousness and deserves to be banished.

4. Implicit teaching

1. Dependence on wise guidance: Misfortune happens when ascetics are far from their Master. The absence of the Bodhisatta is not only physical; it is the distance from the inner presence of wisdom. The Shadow emerges more easily in spiritual solitude.

2. The corruption of the sacred: The offering of liquor arises from a social gesture of honor. What is "rare" for an ascetic is not always what is "good" for him. Vice creeps in precisely through the folds of good intentions and cultural conventions.

3. Drunkenness as regression: The terrible phrase in the ascetic joke – "we were lucky not to be turned into monkeys" – reveals an atavistic truth: addictions unhinge the structures of human consciousness, bringing to the surface an instinctual and primordial nature (the monkey) that is the exact opposite of ascetic control.

5. Relationship with the Essay and Level II

The story is a perfect incarnation of Level II – The Shadow and its Double. The Jungian Shadow is not the abstract "evil", but the inner double that was believed to be dominated. Sāgata is the emblem: the one who

masters the outer serpent (the very symbol of unconscious energy) is knocked down by the inner serpent of intoxication. The tamed Nāga is the power of the unconscious faced outside; Alcohol is the same potency that erupts inside, not integrated.

Sāgata's drunkenness, which leads him to lie with his feet towards the Buddha, is the mirror shock of which the sage speaks. The Buddha uses this scandalous image as a mirror that reflects the exact semblance of vice: the great spiritual hero reduced to a sentient and disordered body. The "cure" is precisely this violent confrontation with evidence, which unmasks the mask of the invincible virtuous, revealing the constitutive fragility of anyone who operates without ethical protection.

6. Compelling anecdotes: everyday life, Jung and the apophatic dimension

- Daily life:

After the triumph, the fall: the addiction that arises from the celebration

Think of the brilliant manager who, due to the infinite pressure to perform, seeks relief in "aperitifs" that become solitary evening habits. Initially it is a "rare prize" after stress (just like the liquor offered by the king), but gradually clouds the lucidity that made it excellent. Sāgata's parable warns that the point of fall is not in misery, but often after triumph. Addiction begins with a celebration granted by those who admire us, and ends with being "with our feet towards" what we previously venerated: our family, our work, our dignity.

The image portrays the man described as the "brilliant manager" after his triumph. He is sitting alone in the center, in a welcoming domestic environment but imbued with solitude. The composition is balanced but thematically unbalanced:

The Subject: Man is the focal element. He wears a dark suit and a wrinkled shirt, suggesting a recent transition from the world of work to a private space. Her posture is hunched over, almost collapsed on itself.

His expression is the key to the narrative: it is a mix of extreme fatigue, inner defeat and a form of silent despair as he looks at the glass. There is no celebration, only heavy resignation.

Alcohol: The glass of whiskey held with both hands is at the center of his visual world, emphasizing addiction. The half-empty whiskey bottle positioned on the right is a visual counterbalance that reinforces the idea that alcohol is not a passing guest, but a fixed and consumed presence.

The Symbolic Addition (The Scale): To the left of the man, a large brass precision scale, almost an object from an ancient pharmacy or alchemical study. It is visibly unbalanced. The plate closest to man is noticeably heavier and lowered. On this weighted plate is a small leather notebook with gold initials, metaphorically representing the "Work", "Dignity" and "Burden" that are crushing it. This scale is not just an object, but a visualization of his compromised psyche.

The Hidden Text (Balance): One word, "BALANCE," is engraved almost invisibly in the ornamental metal cartouche in the center of the balance pivot. It is not an intrusive text, but a hidden detail that can only be noticed on close examination. It represents the lost mental and spiritual balance, the "standing with one's feet towards" his dignity, and the absence of a stable center.

The Atmosphere: The lighting is soft, coming from a table lamp, creating deep shadows that intensify the drama. The background is a leather bookcase and armchair (symbols of his culture and previous comfort), but they are blurred, signifying that his lucidity and his connection with the higher reality ("apophatic") are clouding. A cold light from the window suggests the cold reality of the outside world that has lost meaning.

Comment:

This image seeks to capture not only the action described, but the deep psychological meaning behind it, connecting the most abstract anecdotes (Jung, apophatic, Jātaka).

Man is not just a tired manager; he is a Jungian archetype of the 'fall after the rise', a victim of his own 'hubris' (pride/excess) that has backfired on him in the form of addiction. Addiction itself is visualized not as a vice, but as a relief that has turned into an unbearable burden (the scales).

The detail of "BALANCE" engraved on the scales is the "punctum" of the image: a visual promontory that leads the observer to reflect on the fact that addiction is a breakdown of inner balance. The unbalanced scale, with the "work" notebook weighing the most, is the visualization of the end point: its dignity is what is "worshipped" in the wrong way, leading to its downfall.

In summary, the static vision encompasses the tension between past triumph and present defeat, lucidity and oblivion.

- Karl Jung:

The psychic door: how intoxication dissolves the hero and reveals the Shadow

Drunkenness is the classic submersion of the unintegrated unconscious. Sāgata didn't just drink; has opened a psychic door. His "worldly" powers indicate a remarkable psychic strength but not rooted in a profound transformation (like that of the enlightened one). Jung would say that he had repressed the instinctual Shadow behind the identification with the nāga tamer Hero. Alcohol simply annihilated the Persona of the powerful ascetic, and what emerged was childish, animalistic chaos (dancing, singing, falling). The awakening full of shame is the confrontation of the ego with its dark side.

1. Visual Description of the Image

The image is a large panoramic scene set inside ancient ruins, submerged by lush and mysterious vegetation. At the center of the composition is an ascetic, dressed in a simple draped saffron robe, who appears visibly confused, disoriented and staggering. His expression is one of amazement and bewilderment.

The composition is clearly divided into two symbolic halves that float around him:

Left (Light/Order/Past): Emanating from a white cloud, we see a divine or heroic figure (probably Sāgata or the Buddha) riding a large and powerful nāga (a mythological cobra). The figure is radiant, dressed in gold and red robes, and appears serene and in control. This scene represents the Person of the hero taming the nāga, the ascetic's past identification with spiritual strength and control.

Right (Darkness/Chaos/The Shadow): This section is dominated by an ancient ruined stone door that is crumbling dramatically. From this "psychic door" emerges a horde of demonic and frightening figures. These are the integration of "ferocious animals, monstrous creatures, demons and deformed beings". Some figures are forms of black and feral smoke; others are human forms that fall, float or dance in a grotesque way, embodying the "childish and animalistic" chaos of the submersion of the unconscious.

The lighting is theatrical: warm and golden on the left, cold and ghostly on the right. The general atmosphere is one of ancient mystery and psychic dissolution.

2. Iconographic and Psychological Analysis

The Hero and the Person (Left): The figure riding the nāga perfectly represents the 'Person' of Sāgata—his public and conscious appearance as a "nāga tamer hero". Jung would say that this figure was an egoic identification. The use of light and order in this section emphasizes the structured nature of the conscious mind before collapse.

The Repressed Shadow (Center and Right): Alcohol (implied by Sāgata's intoxication in the center) acted as a psychic solvent. Intoxication "dissolves the Hero" and, in the collapse of Sāgata, we see him lose his physical and mental integrity.

The Psychic Door and the Unconscious (Right): The crumbling stone door is the visual embodiment of the Jungian concept: it is the psychic door that was opened by intoxication. The collapse of the stone symbolizes the annihilation of the ego's defenses. The creatures that emerge from it are not external monsters, but manifestations of the Shadow of Sāgata.

The Submersion (Right): The monstrous figures and the falling human ones embody the "submersion of the unintegrated unconscious". Sāgata no longer "controls" the Shadow; he is submerged in it. Their "childlike and animalistic" nature is made visible through chaotic poses and feral shapes.

3. Commentary and Rating

The image is a success on several levels:

1. Fidelity: The image captures every nuance of the complex Jungian description. The duality between identification with the Hero and the emergence of the Shadow is made clear and powerful. The ascetic in the center is the perfect pivot for the narrative, showing the disintegration of the ego.

2. Aesthetic Quality and Style: The cinematic style, rich in details and textures (the mossy stone, the ascetic's robe, the nāga scales), is superb. The 16:9 composition is leveraged to create a sense of dramatic scale.

In conclusion, the image translated abstract psychological concepts into concrete narrative images that tell a coherent story of the fall and revelation.

- Apophatic dimension:

The kōan of the body on the ground: guarding the mystery without explaining it

The logic of the story is not moralistic, but rather the guardian of an unspeakable mystery. The Jātaka does not explain why one who dominates poisonous snakes cannot dominate a glass. There is a leap, a short circuit that reason does not grasp. Right there, in the silence of explanation, the ineffable emerges: vulnerability is not an accident, but the very nature of the conditioned being, which not even the greatest mediumistic power can fill. The scene of the Buddha who, without scolding anyone, asks "Brothers, does Sāgata show me the same respect as before?" is a kōan. It appeals to knowledge without concept: all monks know and feel, without the need for theories, tragedy and lesson. The truth of the phenomenon of "intoxication" is not explained, but preserved in the image of the body on the ground.

The image is a realistic photograph, set inside an ancient monastery or Buddhist temple outdoors during the sunset hours. The scene is illuminated by a warm and diffused light that filters through the trees and the stone architectural structures, giving the environment a solemn and serene atmosphere.

In the center of the composition, a Buddhist monk, wearing the traditional orange and brown dress, lies on the ground in a reclining position, as if he had fallen asleep or in a state of daze. Near his right hand, placed on the ground, is a small upside-down terracotta cup. Around him, a group of eight monks is sitting in a circle on an uneven stone floor. Some of them observe him with contemplative and worried expressions, others keep a downcast gaze, reflecting a silent awareness of the situation. Their outfits vary slightly in color, from bright orange to dark brown and burgundy.

In the background, slightly raised on a wooden platform under an open pavilion, sits a Buddha (or senior monk of high distinction) in deep meditation, with his eyes closed and a composed expression. His figure is not the direct focal point of the action, but his silent presence permeates the entire scene. Behind him and to the left, there are ancient-looking stone architectural structures, such as temples or stupas, which testify to the history and sacredness of the place. Lush vegetation and tall trees complete the background, creating a contrast between the stillness of the structures and the fluidity of nature.

The image visually represents a key moment in the history of the Surāpāna-jātaka. The central figure of the fallen monk, with the cup turned upside down, symbolizes the inability to control the impulse to alcohol (the surā of the title), despite his previous virtues or mediumistic powers. The cup itself is a powerful iconography, an ordinary object that becomes the catalyst for a personal tragedy.

The circle composition of the surrounding monks reflects the Buddhist community and its silent acknowledgment of what happened. Their different expressions capture the range of possible reactions in the face of human vulnerability: from compassion to reflection on one's own fragility. The lack of direct verbal interaction amplifies the "kōan" nature of the scene, where the truth is not explained but preserved in the image.

The figure of the Buddha (or senior monk) in meditation in the background represents spiritual authority and silent wisdom. His presence, although passive, acts as a moral and philosophical point of reference, a "knowledge without concept" that guides the understanding of the lesson without the need for words or theories. The open pavilion that houses it creates a spatial distinction that emphasizes his role as a detached but compassionate observer.

The sunset light and ancient stone structures evoke a sense of suspended time and sacredness. Nature and architecture merge, creating an environment that invites contemplation and reflection on the ephemeral nature of life and the responsibility of one's actions.

The image effectively captures the complex interaction between the apophatic dimension, the Buddhist anecdote and the human psyche. The choice to exclude writings and to focus on visual narration amplifies the emotional and philosophical impact of the scene.

The tragedy of the fallen monk is not represented in a moralistic or condemning way, but as a manifestation of the vulnerability intrinsic to the human being. His figure on the ground is a visual kōan, a paradox that defies reason and invites a deeper understanding. The scene does not explain the reason for the fall, but shows it in all its factual truth.

The image is a powerful guardian of the unspeakable mystery that permeates daily life and spiritual experience. It suggests that true wisdom does not lie in the rational explanation of every phenomenon, but in the ability to inhabit the silence of explanation and to recognize the ineffable.

In conclusion, the image invites meditation and reflection on the nature of truth, vulnerability and the mystery of existence. It does not limit itself to illustrating a Buddhist anecdote, but transforms it into a contemplative experience that transcends the boundaries of language and theory.

7. Carousel Table – 81. Surāpāna-jātaka with Jungian and apophatic integration

Slide	Title	Scene / visual description	Narrative anecdote (Jātaka 81)	Jungian reference / Psychological anecdote and apophatic dimension
1	**The Tamer Tamer**	Sāgata, covered with glory for subduing the nāga, is now lying in the dust, with his feet turned towards the Buddha who is watching him standing.	"Gentlemen, for a renunciant white liquor is rare and welcome." With this insidious invitation, the holy hermit gives in sip after sip, celebrating his victory over fear, until he himself becomes the prey of unconsciousness.	**Jung**: Identification with the Hero. Sāgata identified himself with his power to tame the Outer Shadow (the serpent). Alcohol dissolves this mask, revealing a much deeper inner Shadow. It is the collapse of the Person. **Apophatic**: Why is the strongest the most fragile? The story does not explain it; it nails us to this mute contradiction, where the mystery of the fall remains entire.
2	**The Festival in the**	Five hundred venerable ascetics, with beards and bark	To honor their extraordinary virtue, the King of Benares offers	**Jung**: Group madness and regression. Far from the Master (symbol of the Self),

Slide	Title	Scene / visual description	Narrative anecdote (Jātaka 81)	Jungian reference / Psychological anecdote and apophatic dimension
	Royal Park	robes, dance and sing disorderly in a regal park, among inverted bowls and scattered sandals.	them a "rare" gift: the best liqueur. The community of wise men, without a guide, succumbs to the strange intoxication.	the collective ego of ascetics is submerged by the mass unconscious. **Apophatic**: The "gift" becomes poison. The story preserves the silence on why virtue does not vaccine against error. The abyss between "sacred" and "profane" is not logical, but experienced as vertigo.
3	**The Monkey Joke**	Under a centuries-old tree, the ascetics weep with shame, covering their faces. A large monkey observes curiously from a branch, creating an eerie visual mirror.	"We drank, danced, sang, cried; It was fortunate that, by drinking the liquor that steals the senses, we were not turned into monkeys."	**Jung**: The archetype of the Shadow Animal. Alcohol unleashes the primordial ape-man, the pre-conscious instinct. **Apophatic**: The phrase about "luck" is charged with a metaphysical terror that is not elaborated. Being transformed into an ape is the unspeakable possibility of the total loss of human form, a silence on the abyss that dwells in us.
4	**The Master's Question**	The Buddha is sitting motionless, with a gaze of deep, inscrutable peace. The monks around him observe, in a silence full of embarrassment and expectation.	"Do you think that Sāgata, in the state in which he is now, could master even a harmless water serpent?" asks the Master, after showing everyone the state of the disciple on the ground.	**Jung**: The confrontation with the Self. The Buddha does not judge, but reflects. It is the mirror that forces us to see the Shadow, right there where the ideal used to be. **Apophatic**: The question is the answer. There is no sermon, but a logical gap that tears the mind. The mystery of the lost and regained consciousness is preserved in that questioning that explains nothing, but makes us *see* everything.

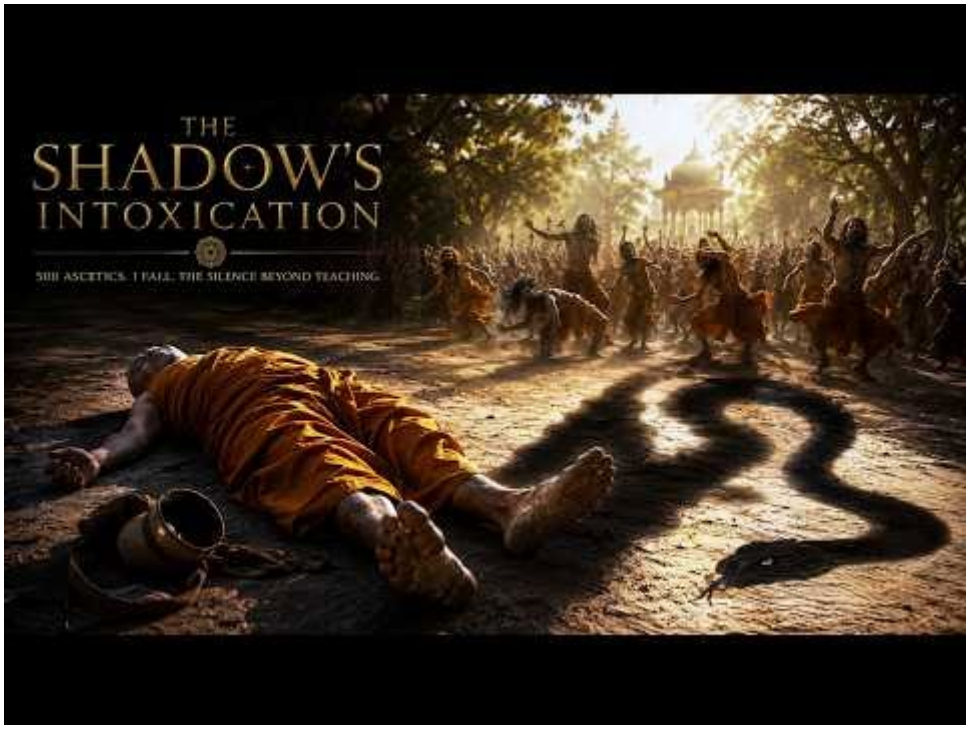
8. The apophatic dimension in evidence

The Surāpāna-jātaka reaches its apophatic climax not in the final rule against alcohol, but in two images that function as icons of silence.

The first is the scandalous image of Sāgata with his feet towards the Buddha. It is a gesture of destructive power that has no words. The story does not dwell on a treatise on contempt, but simply places the hero's body in a posture that cries out the truth. The ineffable is there: how can a body still contain the presence of the wise man, if his senses are elsewhere? Who is "Sāgata" at that moment? His name, his history, his powers have been swallowed up by a chemical nothingness. The scene holds an ontological mystery about identity: it does not explain the phenomenon, it shows it until the silence resonates within us.

The second is the crying and joke of ascetics about monkeys. There is no doctrinal elaboration on why intoxication has not physically transformed them into animals. The statement is left there, like a splinter. It indicates that the mystery of the human form hangs on a very thin thread of awareness. The Jātaka guards this knowledge without concept: deep down, we immediately feel the "familiarity" of that fear, not because we have a theory of devolution, but because something, silent in the blasphemy of drunkenness, resonates in our interiority like a warning without words. The truth is not told; it suddenly appears as a mute evidence.

Video: https://youtu.be/YKWarNpuZDA



82. Mittavinda-jātaka

– The insatiable greed that leads from palaces of goddesses to an island of orcas.

Scene: The protagonist grabs a goat-ogress and is thrown into the sea, then mistaken for a thief.

Daily life: Endless desires that lead to ruin; the "goat" as a substitute for happiness.

Jung: Projection of the soul (goddess-ogress), compulsion to repeat, infernal descent by fixation on the object.

Synopsis of the plot

Mittavinda, in a previous existence at the time of the Buddha Kassapa, is a stubborn and rebellious monk. His insatiable greed drives him, after enjoying heavenly pleasures in successive palaces of crystal, silver and gems on enchanted islands, to want more and more. Not satisfied with the goddesses who welcome him, he sees another island and, blinded by desire, grabs a goat-ogress (actually a female demon in disguise) hoping to obtain new pleasures. The creature throws him into the sea. Having survived, he is mistaken for a thief and sentenced to wear a flint cogwheel on his head. The Bodhisatta, king of the gods, appears to him to remind him that this torture will cease only when all his sins are exhausted. Mittavinda, now identified with his pain, will have to wait for the end of karma to be reborn according to his merits.

Dramatic Structure

- Characters:

  - Mittavinda: the insatiable, shadow figure dominated by greed and self-deception.

- The goddesses of the palaces: objects of desire that are always outdated, projections of the soul that promise happiness without ever satisfying.

- The goat-ogress: guardian of the underworld, terrifying aspect of the projected soul, which reveals the destructive side of attachment.

- The Bodhisatta / King of the Devas: voice of wisdom that shows the karmic mechanism without intervening, pure presence that shows the way beyond torment.

- Conflict: the inability to stop. Mittavinda cannot enjoy what he has because his mind is always turned to the next object. Greed is a perennial conflict between being and having.

- Turning point: the moment of grabbing the goat-ogress. It is the fatal gesture in which lust collides with its demonic face; the drive to possess turns into fall and condemnation.

- Outcome: the flint wheel on the head. It is not external punishment, but solidification of fixation: desire becomes an instrument of inner torture until it exhausts itself.

Explicit teaching

"Neither crystal palaces nor shining goddesses can appease a greedy heart. The punishment you have chosen for yourself – the flint wheel – will grind your head until sin is completely purged." The Jataka declares that insatiable attachment inevitably leads to suffering and that only the consumption of karma liberates. The wheel is the exact equivalent of the compulsion to desire: what was supposed to crown pleasure becomes a helmet of torture.

Implicit teaching

The implicit is more subtle: Mittavinda does not "fall" by chance. Each stage – the palace of crystal, silver, gems – is a step in an inverted initiatory descent. By not heeding the first warning (discontent in the midst of abundance), he transforms the heavenly path into a hellish itinerary. The goat is the key symbol: an animal linked to sacrifice, here turned into a devouring demon. The substitute object of happiness (the goat as yet another "elsewhere") is actually the guardian of the door of shadow. The story suggests that the real prison is not the wheel on his head, but identification with the movement of desire: Mittavinda is his wheel, he does not just suffer it.

Relationship with the Essay and Level II

In the essay Beyond the Name, the Dream and the Door, Jātaka 82 ranks as the fourth of the five stories of Level II: The Shadow and its Double: Unmasking the Masks of Vice. Here the shadow is no longer an external enemy but an internal mechanism of infinite substitution. The structure "celestial palace → palace even more beautiful → monster" reveals the dynamics of the double: vice masquerades as an ever better prize, but each mask already contains the face of torment. The "goddess-ogress" is the perfect Jungian double of the soul: the same figure that first welcomes now throws into the abyss. The essay shows how the asceticism of the heart does not consist in accumulating mystical experiences, but in recognizing the compulsion to repeat and the projection of the shadow on objects of desire. The narrow door of this asceticism is the renunciation not

of the object but of the drive that seeks it; It is an apophatic path because it does not say what happiness is, but denies, one after the other, its substitutes.

Compelling anecdotes: daily life, Jung and the apophatic dimension

1. The collector of achievements.

A manager gets a prestigious role. After a month, she already fantasizes about the next assignment, certain that there she will find the fulfillment. Each new goal empties quickly, like the crystal palaces of Mittavinda. The cogwheel appears when, in order to have "more", it neglects family and health, finally feeling life as an unbearable burden on the head. Jung would say that the shadow has taken the face of ambition; The apophatic dimension whispers: happiness is not in the next goal, but neither is it in proud renunciation. It is a non-knowing one's true good.

In the center we find a man in an elegant suit, sitting in front of a series of trophies and awards. His face does not express victory, but thought, restlessness, inner weariness. It is the moment when external success can no longer answer the hidden question: "Is this what I was looking for?"

Several worlds open up around him:

On the left: a modern city, skyscrapers, economic power, a figure observing from above. It is the realm of conquest: career, status, social image.

The mirror: shows a version of himself still linked to appearance. It is the Jungian theme of the person, the social mask built to be recognized.

The large cogwheel behind him: he recalls Mittavinda's wheel, but also the psychological cycle of desire. Every goal achieved quickly becomes a new need.

The crystal-clear city in the upper right: it looks like a heavenly palace, but there is something unreal about it. It is the symbol of illusion: the next goal always appears as the definitive promise.

The figure dragging a stone: it represents the weight of attachment. The incessant search for "more" becomes what crushes the human being.

The person seated under the ancient arch in the light of sunset: this is the apophatic counterpoint. It is not another success to be achieved, but a return to silence.

Jungian analysis

From Jung's point of view, the image tells of a conflict between the self and the self.

Man has built an identity through doing:

"I am what I get."

But the Shadow emerges when success is no longer enough.

Its shadow is not simply something negative: it is the repressed part that asks to be heard. Ambition, perhaps born as a healthy desire for growth, becomes an autonomous force that governs life.

The wheel behind him suggests that the protagonist is still inside an automatic movement:

desire → conquers → emptiness → new desire

It is a golden prison.

Apophatic reading

The apophatic dimension introduces a reversal:

Truth is not found by adding something, but by removing illusions.

The protagonist seeks fullness in the crystal palaces, but the answer appears in the empty space of the arch.

The image seems to say:

you are not your role;

you are not your successes;

you are not even your failure.

The apophatic way does not propose a new spiritual identity to be conquered. Even the "awakening" can become a new trophy.

The real passage is the recognition of the mystery:

Life is not possession, but encounter.

Connection with Mittavinda-jātaka

In the Buddhist story, Mittavinda continually desires something greater: every wonder achieved loses value in the face of a new craving. In the end, what seemed like a gift becomes a condemnation.

The image translates this dynamic into the contemporary world:

the palaces = the desired successes;

trophies = temporary rewards;

the wheel = the psychological karma of repetition;

the weight on the shoulders = the price of identification.

Final comment

The image does not condemn ambition – it shows the moment when ambition forgets its purpose.

The problem is not climbing the mountain, but believing that the summit can finally fill the void.

The distant figure, sitting in the stillness, suggests a different form of wealth: not owning the world, but ceasing to be possessed by the need to possess it.

It is an image about the transition from "becoming someone" to "discovering what remains when each role falls".

Story

The surprise ending: the "click" that the protagonist has always interpreted as emptying turns out, in the end, to be the sound of the only real opening — not because he finds an answer, but because he stops needing it. Even the desire to "understand and renounce wisely" is unmasked as the last trophy of the collection, in line with the apophatic tone: happiness lies neither in the next goal nor in proud renunciation.

The collector of achievements

Marco had learned to recognize the exact sound that a life makes when it empties: a small click, the same as a door that closes slowly. He felt it every time he got something.

It had happened with the first promotion. For two weeks he had felt invincible, like the man on the glass terrace looking out over the city at his feet, certain that he had finally found the highest point in the world. Then, one morning, opening the wardrobe to choose the tie, he heard the click. The finish line, up close, was just another empty room.

So he had chased the next role. And the one after that. Every peak he reached appeared to him, from afar, as shining as a crystal castle — spires, light, promises — but once inside it turned out to be made of the same substance as dreams: beautiful, cold, and impossible to inhabit for more than an instant.

He had started skipping dinners. Then birthdays. His daughter had stopped asking him to play, not out of anger, but out of a silent surrender that hurt more than any protest. His wife now looked at him as one looks at a guest who lives in the same house.

He continued to climb the ladder. More trophies on the shelf, more gilded frames, more mirrors in which to arrange the knot of the tie and say to each other: almost. Almost arrived. Almost happy.

He didn't notice when the cogwheel began to spin above his head—gigantic, old iron, gears grinding out the time he no longer had. He felt it only as a weight behind the back of his neck, a dull ticking that woke him up at three in the morning. It must have been tiredness, he thought. He would rest after the next milestone.

One evening, sitting at his desk, his phone silent in front of him and his hands crossed under his chin, he did the math. Twenty years. Twenty years chasing rooms that emptied the instant he entered them. He thought of stopping—of leaving it all, of sitting on a stone and looking at the mountains like the man he had once seen in a photograph, motionless, at peace, in front of an arch of ancient ruins.

But even that thought, he realized, was just another trophy. I will be the one who understood, the one who gave up everything for wisdom. Even renunciation, seen in this way, sparkled like another peak to climb, another golden frame in which to insert one's best reflection.

It was at that moment — not before — that he understood what had really been chasing him all those years.

It was not success. It was not even, as he had suspected for a moment, the peace of the renunciator. It was simply being right about what happiness was. He had spent his life collecting answers — the right role, the right goal, and now even the right renunciation — because he couldn't stand the idea of not knowing.

The cogwheel, he understood, was not the fatigue of chasing. It was the noise made by a mind that refuses to remain, even for a single breath, in non-knowing.

That night he didn't call anyone. He did not write resolutions, he did not promise himself changes. He just sat in the dark, not knowing—for the first time without even trying to know—what his true good was.

And the click he heard, this time, was not that of a door closing.

It was that of a door that had simply never needed a key.

2. The "perfect" relationship that becomes hell.

A person is constantly looking for ideal partners. At first, every new love seems like an enchanted palace. Then dissatisfaction takes over, and the gaze turns to another person, the "goat" who promises who knows what completeness. Until she comes across a suffering, possessive figure who chains her emotionally: the goat turns out to be an ogress, and finds herself carrying the wheel of a toxic relationship. The projected soul drags from ecstasy to torment. Apophatically, we discover that true love is not "finding the right person" but stopping looking for objects that fill a void that has another name.

The image visually represents the theme of the search for love as a projection of the soul: a journey that seems to begin as a promise of fullness and ends in the discovery of an inner prison. It is a symbolic translation of the story of the Mittavinda-jātaka, read through a Jungian and apophatic lens.

The composition is divided into two opposing worlds.

1. The Bright Side: The Palace of Illusion

On the left, a golden, almost Edenic light dominates.

A path leads to a glowing castle: it is the symbol of the perfect place imagined by the mind. Couples who appear immersed in beauty represent the many forms of idealized love:

the partner as "savior";

the relationship as a promise of healing;

the other as a definitive response to inner emptiness.

The light, the flowers, the harmonious landscape evoke the language of the romantic soul: what Jung would call a strong projection of the soul/animus. We do not really see the other: we see the psychic image that we have deposited on the other.

The castle is not necessarily fake: it is a promise. But it is a promise built out of itself.

2. The center: the path of consciousness

In the center appears a figure walking on the border between the two worlds.

It is perhaps the most important symbol of the image.

He is not yet completely in the light nor completely in darkness. It is the human being in the moment of search: the one who passes from one relationship to another, from one ideal to another, always chasing "the right person".

The path is also an initiatory symbol:

first phase: "I will find what completes me";

second phase: "why is what I find not enough?";

Third phase: "Perhaps the problem is not the object sought".

Here the apophatic dimension enters: the truth emerges not by adding something, but by removing an illusion.

The dark side: the goat that becomes an ogress

On the right appears the desired image transformation.

The black goat, with horns, recalls the archetype of ambiguous desire: what seemed innocent and fascinating reveals a dark face.

It is very close to the mechanism of the Jungian projection of the Shadow:

At the beginning:

"I finally found what I was looking for."

Then:

"Why is this person suffocating me?"

Finally:

"Why did I get into a dynamic that reflects something unrecognized within me?"

The dark female figure is not simply "the external evil": symbolically it is the repressed aspect of the soul. The relationship becomes the mirror of an addiction, of an emotional hunger, of a need to be saved.

The Wheel and the Chains: The Cycle of Desire

The large wheel is the central symbol of the dark side.

Recall:

the karmic cycle of desire in Buddhism;

the wheel of existence;

the unconscious repetition of psychological patterns.

The person drags the wheel because he believes he is a prisoner of the other, but symbolically he drags an older mechanism:

the need to find outside what has not been recognized inside.

The chain is not born only from the relationship: it arises from the identification with the image of the perfect relationship.

Jungian reading

In Jung's key:

The image tells the passage from projection to individuation.

At first the other is seen as:

lost soul;

completion;

Promised paradise.

But when the projection drops, the Shadow appears.

The crisis is not just a loss of love: it is a possibility of transformation.

The question changes:

From:

"Who is the person who will make me complete?"

a:

"What part of me am I desperately looking for in the other?"

Apophatic reading

The apophatic dimension completely overturns the story.

It doesn't say:

"You have to find a purer love."

He says:

"Discover what remains when the need to find something to fill the void falls."

Authentic love is not born of a hunger for completion, but of freedom.

The relationship is no longer a palace to be conquered, nor a wheel to be dragged.

It becomes an encounter between two beings who do not ask the other to be God.

Symbolic synthesis

The image tells a parable:

The castle promised from the outside can be transformed into the prison built from the inside.

The goat can become an ogress when the soul forgets to look at its own Shadow.

Liberation is not about finding the perfect person, but about awakening the inner space that never needed to be completed.

It is a representation very consistent with the theme of the Mittavinda-jātaka: the human being continues to pursue greater and greater pleasures until he discovers that the wheel that torments him was also the wheel of his own desire.

Story

I wrote "The path of the palaces", a story that follows Marco along the path of the image: from the enchanted castles of first loves, through the goat that turns out to be an ogress, up to the chained wheel. The surprise ending is not the meeting with the "right" person, but the discovery that the wheel had no pivot — it turned only because he kept pushing it, convinced that stopping meant losing love itself.

The path of the palaces

Marco had been walking on the stone path for how long, he didn't know anymore. Behind him, suspended in the golden morning light like paintings hanging from the fog, were all his beginnings.

There was Elena, the first, with flowers in her hair, in front of a castle that seemed to be built of pure light. It will be her, he had thought then. Finally it will be her. The castle was shining, and he had believed in it with all his chest.

Then Sara had arrived, smiling among the hydrangeas, and Elena's castle had suddenly become small, opaque, something already seen. Sara had another splendor, it had to be the real one.

And then Giulia, with her hands clasped in prayer among the white flowers, and even before — or perhaps after, by now the order was confused — someone else, her face turned in a mute dialogue that he no longer remembered what she had said.

The same spell every time. Each time the same crack, thin, which opened after a few months: this is not the right person. And the gaze that already turned away, looking for the next building.

In front of him, now, the path curved and the light went out in a lead-colored sky. There was a black goat, huge, with eyes as white as stones washed by the river. He didn't know why, but he knew he had to follow her. Goats, after all, always promise something: milk, wool, a simple and sincere hearth, far from the castles that are too shiny that always turn out to be an illusion.

He approached.

The goat turned, and as he turned he was no longer a goat. She was a woman with hair like torn roots, her hands outstretched towards him, her eyes full of an ancient hunger. He did not seize him violently. He grabbed it with need, and it's a much harder kind of grip to break.

Marco found himself kneeling next to a huge wooden wheel, chained to it by the wrist, while she whispered words to him that seemed like love and that were, in reality, an infinite request: not to look elsewhere, not to breathe without me, not to exist except to fill myself. Every day the wheel turned a little, and he with it, always in the same place, more and more tired, convinced — like all those chained — that it was still love, because otherwise why suffer so much?

From a cell not far away, a man watched him in silence, his face in his hands. He didn't say anything. Maybe he had already brought that wheel. Maybe he was still carrying it, to another point in the circle.

Marco pulled the chain until his wrists bled. Nothing. The wheel was made to be pulled, not to be broken by those who are chained to it.

It was then—exhausted, with no voice to implore or accuse—that he stopped altogether. Not to give up. To look, finally, not at her, not at the next goat on the horizon, not at the next castle.

He looked at the wheel.

And he saw that there was no pivot in the center. No axis to which it was really attached. She turned because he kept pushing her, convinced that stopping meant losing something — love, promise, the very meaning of the journey. But there was nothing to lose, for there was nothing to hold him but his own hand wrapped around the chain.

He opened his fist.

The chain fell to the ground with a dull sound, too light for all the pain it had brought.

The goat-woman looked at him, and for a moment, before dissolving into the fog as do things that exist only because someone looks at them with hunger, her face was no more ferocious. He was just tired. Tired like him. Perhaps, Marco thought, it was him. Or it had been, each time, the same hunger, worn by different faces: Elena, Sara, Giulia, the goat, the ogress — all different clothes lowered over a single void that he had always called, by mistake, love.

He got up. The path in front of him no longer led to any castle or wheel. He simply carried on, in the fog, without promises.

He walked.

And for the first time in his life, he didn't look back to find someone who would come to fill his steps.

He was not free because he had finally found the right person.

He was free because he had stopped looking for one.

3. The wheel of consumption.

In everyday life, the endless desire is embodied in compulsive shopping, social media, notifications. Every purchase is a crystal island that shines for a day, then gets bored. The flint wheel is the credit to be paid, the anxiety, the sense of emptiness after gratification. There is no visible demon, but a head that grinds thoughts. The apophatic guards the mystery: the silence after scrolling is fuller than any content, but it cannot be possessed.

The generated image can be read as a visual allegory of the wheel of desire, in tune with the theme of the Mittavinda-jātaka, with the psychology of Carl Gustav Jung and with the apophatic perspective of the void as a place of transformation.

The composition is divided into two worlds:

On the left we find an urban, domestic and contemporary scene. A person is sitting surrounded by bags, purchased objects, boxes, fragments of consumption. The smartphone illuminates the face while notifications, images, virtual desires float around it. There is no external monster: the conflict is internal, in the mind captured by a continuous flow of stimuli.

In the center dominates a large stone wheel, the main symbolic element. The wheel seems ancient, heavy, almost ritual. Behind it appears a disturbing figure, almost an archetype of the shadow: a face that observes and suggests the unconscious part that feeds the incessant movement of desire.

On the right, the scene changes radically: a figure sitting in silence looks at an open landscape, mountains, light, nature. There is no accumulation, there is no frenetic movement. Only presence.

Jungian reading: the shadow wheel

In a Jungian perspective, the wheel represents an image of the collective unconscious: a psychic mechanism that continues to turn because it is fed by projections and compensations.

The objects purchased are not just objects: they become symbols of a sought-after identity.

"If I own this, I'll be complete."

"If I get attention, I'll have value."

"If I achieve the next wish, I will find peace."

But the wheel does not stop. Every satisfaction creates a new lack.

The dark figure behind the wheel can be interpreted as the shadow: not evil, but what the ego refuses to see. The need to fill the void, the fear of silence, the inability to remain without stimuli.

Reading the Mittavinda-jātaka

In the tale of the Mittavinda-jātaka, the protagonist pursues ever greater pleasures and does not recognize the mechanism of craving. The pursuit of happiness through accumulation becomes a prison.

The wheel in the image recalls precisely this dynamic:

desire turns;

gratification passes;

a new desire is born;

The wheel continues.

The stone is not just an external weight: it is the very movement of the mind that produces suffering.

Apophatic dimension: the mystery beyond possession

The right part of the image represents the apophatic path: not an answer, but a subtraction.

Silence does not offer a new object to conquer.

The person sitting in the light does not "possess" peace: he simply no longer fights against emptiness.

The apophatic would say:

What you search for through a thousand images cannot be found in one image.

The emptiness that frightens the consumerist mind instead becomes a free space.

The criticism of the present

The image also speaks of our time:

The stone wheel has gone digital.

Once they were material objects; today they are:

notifications;

social endorsements;

instant purchases;

continuous comparison;

search for a new version of himself.

The millstone no longer produces flour: it produces consumed attention.

Symbolic synthesis

Item	Meaning
Smartphone	fragmented desire, search for confirmation
Bags and objects	momentary illusions of fullness
Stone wheel	cycle of craving and repetition
Dark Figure	Unconscious shadow, unrecognized desire
Openness to nature	awakening, presence, liberation
Candle	fragile but alive awareness

The image therefore does not simply oppose consumption and spirituality: it shows an inner passage. The wheel must not be destroyed; must be seen. The moment she is recognized, she stops dominating.

It is the typical movement of awakening: from the compulsive search for something to possess to the discovery of a space that cannot be owned.

Story

I wrote "The Flint Wheel", inspired by the image: Clara trapped in the cycle of compulsive shopping and notifications, with the stone millstone fueled by credit and anxiety. The surprise ending reveals that the meditative woman on the terrace is not another person, but Clara herself at a different time — the same soul that oscillates between the noise of consumption and the full silence that no purchase can give.

The flint wheel

Clara had bought the white shoes at 11:47 p.m. She didn't need another pair of white shoes—she already had three, almost identical, buried in boxes she'd never opened again—but for the twelve seconds between tapping "Buy Now" and confirming her order, something inside her had stopped screaming.

Then silence returned. And silence, for Clara, was the most unbearable thing in the world.

He had filled the living room with boxes. Sneakers, a bag, a coat that she had seen on an influencer in a five-second story and that now already seemed out of fashion while she was still unwrapping it. The phone in her hand sent her hearts, notifications, the faces of other women who were more beautiful, happier, more complete — each photo a crystal island, beautiful, unreachable, and a second of glance was enough for it to crack and another one was needed.

Behind her, even though Clara didn't see him—she'd never seen him, in fact, in all these years—a huge millstone was spinning non-stop. A stone head, with only one eye in the center of her forehead, pushed her with hands that seemed to have been made especially for that gesture, always, since before Clara was born.

Instead of wheat, cards and cards dripped from the millstone: receipts, bank statements, unpaid installments, small plastic rectangles that glittered like counterfeit coins.

Clara was buying. The millstone was turning. Someone, somewhere, paid — always her, in fact, even if she never noticed it at the time of purchase, only later, at the end of the month, when the bill came back to her like a cold wave.

That night, exhausted, she put the phone down on the sofa. For the first time in I didn't know how long, he didn't open another card, he didn't see another image. She simply sat there, among the open boxes, in silence.

And in the silence she felt, for a very long moment, a fullness that no purchase had ever given her. It lasted a few seconds. Then anxiety went back to calling her by name, and her hand ran back to the phone.

Thousands of miles away—or perhaps simply in another room of the same inner house, it is difficult to say in these stories—another woman was sitting on a stone terrace, in front of a valley that opened up under a dawn sky. He had nothing in his hands. A candle burned beside her, small and quiet. She looked at the mountains without looking for anything to possess inside, and that non-searching, paradoxically, filled her chest with something that none of Clara's boxes could ever contain.

The two women had never met. Yet, if someone could see both rooms at the same time, they would notice a strange detail: the same forehead, the same way of gathering her hair in a light bun, the same thin hands.

They were not two women. They were the same, at two different times in the same life — or perhaps, even more disturbingly, at the same time, because time, when it comes to the soul, never flows where we believe.

Clara, the one in the first room, did not yet know that there was a door, at the end of the dark corridor beyond the living room, which opened onto a stone arch and a valley at dawn. She had never looked for her, because no one had ever told her that it was enough to stop — not to buy something else, not to scroll yet, simply to stop — to find herself already there, sitting, with a lit candle, looking at the mountains without needing to own them.

The millstone continued to turn behind her, faithful, indefatigable. But she only grinded because someone kept bringing her something to grind.

That night Clara left the phone on the couch for a few minutes longer than usual. It was not a goodbye. It was only the beginning of a door that, for the first time, had ceased to seem closed to her.

The emptiness after the purchase and the fullness after the silence are born in the same place of the heart.

Only what changes is what you decide to let us in.

4. Mittavinda and the complex of the Ego.

From the Jungian point of view, Mittavinda embodies an ego that is identified with the drive motion. The goddesses are projections of the soul, which in their luminous phase reflect the beauty of the Self, but in the dark phase (goat-ogress) they show the terrifying side of the unintegrated unconscious. The compulsion to repeat is the attempt of the Ego to grasp the soul as an external object, with a consequent infernal descent: psychic energy regresses and becomes torment. The flint wheel is a distorted mandala, a symbol of an unrealized Self but inflicted as destiny. The healing implicit in the story is not the removal of the wheel, but the exhaustion of karma: thus in analysis the symptom is not erased but understood until it loses energy.

The image can be read as a symbolic representation of Mittavinda's psychic journey, not as a simple narrative illustration of the Mittavinda-jātaka, but as a sort of dramatic mandala of the unconscious, where the myth becomes an inner map.

1. The composition: three worlds of the soul

The scene is built on a tripartite division:

Left: The Luminous Kingdom of the Soul

at the center: the drama of the ego

Right: The descent into the shadows

This structure recalls a profoundly Jungian dynamic: the human being oscillates between identification with the Ego, encounter with the Soul and confrontation with the Shadow.

The Left Side: The Goddesses and the Promise of the Self

The luminous female figures represent the dimension of the Soul.

In the language of Carl Gustav Jung, the Soul is not simply a female figure, but a psychic function that leads the Ego towards the deepest center of the personality, the Self.

The goddesses appear:

harmonics,

golden,

surrounded by nature,

associated with flowers and light.

They are therefore images of a possible totality: the promise of a balanced relationship with the inner mystery.

But the fundamental point of the myth is that Mittavinda does not recognize these figures as inner symbols: he tries to possess them as external objects.

And this is where the fall is born.

The Soul, when it is transformed by the Ego into a possession, loses its transformative function and becomes a source of projection.

The center: Mittavinda and the weight of the ego

The protagonist drags a giant stone wheel.

This is the strongest image of the entire composition.

The wheel can be read as:

the desire that always returns to itself;

compulsive repetition;

karma as automatic movement;

destiny not integrated.

The chain connects Mittavinda to the wheel: he is not simply a man punished from the outside, but a man tied to his own inner structure.

The wheel is not a prison built by someone:

it is the form that his own desire takes.

In analytical terms, the symptom is not an enemy to be eliminated: it is a message from the unconscious.

The broken mandala in the center

Behind Mittavinda appears a circular shape similar to a mandala.

But it is a divided mandala:

a bright part,

An obscure part.

This is a very important symbol.

The mandala in Jung often represents the image of the order of the Self.

Here, however, it appears deformed:

it is a Self that is not yet integrated.

There is no unity between light and shadow.

Mittavinda's problem is not having dark desires: the problem is not recognizing them.

The removed shadow returns as destiny.

The right side: the goat-ogress and the Shadow

The monstrous creature represents the terrifying side of the unconscious.

It is the transformation of the Soul when the Ego is no longer able to dialogue with it.

The benevolent female figure of the first part is reversed into the devouring figure.

It is an archetypal theme:

the nourishing mother becomes the devouring mother;

the guide becomes a persecutor;

desire becomes torment.

Not because the feminine is negative, but because what is denied returns in a destructive form.

The line of men with the wheel

On the dark side we see other men dragging wheels.

This detail suggests that Mittavinda is not an isolated case.

It is a universal human condition: the man who repeats without understanding.

The wheel becomes almost a metaphor for consciousness imprisoned in its own schemes.

As in depth psychology, repetition continues until the unconscious content is brought to consciousness.

Apophatic reading: the void behind the symbol

From a negative theology perspective, the image can be read even more radically.

Liberation does not come by conquering the light or destroying the shadow.

It comes when the ego understands that both are provisional images.

The wheel does not break by force.

It is consumed when attachment ceases.

The apophatic void is not absence: it is the space in which the rigid identity of the ego loses consistency.

Final comment

This image therefore represents a psychology of awakening through falling.

Mittavinda is not simply a punished sinner: he is a man who must meet his own shadow to understand the nature of desire.

The wheel in front of him is the central symbol: it is not his final condemnation, it is the silent teacher who shows him what needs to be seen.

Transformation is not about breaking free from the wheel.

It consists in understanding who it is who believes he is dragging it.

Story

I wrote "The Wheel That Cannot Be Stealed", following the Jātaka through the Jungian lens: Mittavinda grasping the chain to possess the goddesses, the infernal descent, the line of chained men who each believe they are the only one. The surprise ending reveals two things together: that the flint wheel was actually a mandala distorted by the need to possess it, and that the free man encountered at the beginning of the path was Mittavinda himself — not healed by removing the chain, but having exhausted the need to fight against it.

The wheel that cannot be stolen

Mittavinda had always walked on the same path, even if it seemed new to him every time.

There was a stone bridge, a clear river, and three goddesses who looked at him from the sky with eyes full of a beauty that took his breath away. They wore gold and silk as if the light itself had decided to become a body. He desired them with a hunger that had no name — they were not people, they were promises, and Mittavinda had spent his life running after promises, convinced that one of them, in the end, belonged to him.

In front of him, on the same path, another man walked empty-handed, lightly, unhurriedly. He didn't look at the goddesses. He simply walked, as if the bridge and the river were enough for themselves.

Mittavinda could not understand it. How can you not want gold?

Then he saw the wheel.

It was huge, made of rough stone, chained to a pin that seemed to have no end. Someone told him — he didn't remember who, perhaps a voice inside him that spoke with his own mouth — that whoever pushed that wheel would one day possess it, and with it all the power that the goddesses held. It was enough to take it. It was enough to grasp it, as one grasps an object that rightfully belongs to us.

Mittavinda grabbed the chain.

And the instant his hands closed on it, the sky behind the goddesses cracked like glass. A roar crept out of a black crack, and a beast with twisted horns and embers' eyes rose from an abyss of fire, laughing at a laugh that knew all about Mittavinda—his every hunger, his every run, his every broken promise.

From that moment on, he pushed the wheel relentlessly, along with a line of other chained men like himself, all with the same hollow face, all convinced—each on his own—that he was the only one, the first, the

unfortunate one to whom this had happened. They didn't look at each other. Everyone believed their chain was different from that of their neighbor.

Years passed, or perhaps only moments dilated by pain. Mittavinda pulled, fell, got up, pulled again. He asked the demon, once, how long it would last. The demon laughed, "As long as you continue to believe that the wheel is outside of you."

Mittavinda did not understand. He kept shooting.

Until one day — not out of virtue, not out of enlightenment, simply out of exhaustion, like a candle that has nothing left to burn — he stopped feeling the anger towards the chain. He didn't let her go. She couldn't, she was still clinging to her wrist. But he stopped fighting against it, and looked at it, for the first time, as one looks at one's own thing instead of an enemy.

And in that moment, without a jerk, without blinding light, the rough stone wheel she had always thought she was wearing turned out to be something else: not a boulder imposed from the outside, but a design — a circle inside a square, a flower in the center, the same shapes she had seen suspended in the sky at the beginning of her journey, even before meeting the goddesses, even before they want gold. A mandala. He had always been a mandala, distorted by his own need to possess it as an object instead of recognizing it as part of himself.

The demon, the goddesses, the flint wheel: they had never been outside him. It was him, broken into pieces that did not speak to each other — the golden desire, the horned terror, the infinite toil — until something, inside Mittavinda, recognized them all as its own blood.

The chain did not fall. It remained on his wrist. But it stopped weighing as before, because Mittavinda had stopped pulling something at it, and had simply begun to wear it, as one carries a scar whose history is now known.

The other man on the path—the one empty-handed, the one who walked unhurriedly—had never been a stranger he had met by chance.

It was Mittavinda himself, at a point in the circle where the wheel had already finished turning.

The symptom cannot be erased by grasping it as an enemy.

It is exhausted when it is recognized as part of oneself.

Carousel Table: 82. Mittavinda-jātaka with Jungian integration

Slide	Title	Scene / visual description	Narrative anecdote (Jātaka 82)	Jungian reference / Psychological anecdote and apophatic dimension
1	**The palaces that do not satiate**	A man among smiling goddesses on a crystal island; His eyes look beyond, towards an island of silver.	Mittavinda is welcomed into heavenly palaces, but as soon as he settles there he desires the next island, despising the present gift.	The projection of the soul (anima projection): the object of desire shines with divine light because it carries the reflection of the Self. Mittavinda does not see the goddess, he only sees the "next". Apophatic: full enjoyment is silent, it is not in any "where".

Slide	Title	Scene / visual description	Narrative anecdote (Jātaka 82)	Jungian reference / Psychological anecdote and apophatic dimension
2	**The goat-ogress: the fatal leap**	A goat with a demonic gaze on the shore of a dark island; Mittavinda grabs him by the horns and is lifted into the air, then thrown into the sea.	Driven by greed, Mittavinda tries to catch a goat on a deserted island. The goat is actually a powerful ogress that throws it into the ocean.	Encounter with the Shadow: the soul reveals itself in its terrifying aspect because it has been forced to be an object. The "goat" is the symbol of the sacrifice of desire itself. Apophatic: the true nature of the goat is not "explainable"; the story guards it as an ineffable threshold.
3	**The flint wheel: the face of desire**	A man holding a heavy stone cogwheel on his head, with his face suffering but still, on an empty beach.	Mistaken for a thief, Mittavinda is sentenced to carry the flint wheel. The Bodhisatta reminds him that the penalty will cease when the sin is purged.	Compulsion to repeat and fixation on the object: the wheel on the head is the identification of the ego with the torturing desire. There is no external persecutor; The wheel is the shape of his own karma. Apophatic: pain "is not explained", it is a mute presence that consumes guilt; when he is silent, he frees.
4	**The King of Devas: a gaze that liberates**	A luminous being suspended in mid-air points to Mittavinda with a teaching gesture; light around it, under the wheel that still grinds.	The Bodhisatta, king of the gods, appears and explains the law of karma to Mittavinda, then returns to his abode, without directly freeing him.	The Self as a witness: The King of the devas is the figure of the Self who knows the totality but does not interfere with the dynamics of the shadow. It shows that redemption is in the awareness of the mechanism. Apophatic: the ultimate truth is not told; the Bodhisatta's gaze is a "knowledge without concept" that resonates within.

Apophatic dimension: the Jātaka as guardian of the mystery

This Jātaka does not really explain why Mittavinda throws himself into the arms of the ogress, nor does it dissolve the paradox of a liberation that coincides with the natural end of torture. It does not offer consolatory psychology, it does not indicate a technique. It guards the phenomenon of insatiable greed as one guards a fire: without touching it, making one feel its heat. The goat-ogress, the flint wheel, the gem palaces are images that show without demonstrating. The reader who enters it does not receive a map, but a resonance: something is silent in the interior and simultaneously moves. That "familiar" that one feels is not produced by a conceptual identification – "ah, it's my greed" – but by a pre-reflective recognition, as when one glimpses a forgotten face in a dream and knows, without words, that it belongs to us.

The apophatic dimension shines through in the final stanza: the wheel is not removed; he will grind "until sin is purged." There is no "you are forgiven", there is no "here is the solution". Teaching denies itself to any mental appropriation: you cannot grasp liberation any more than you can grasp the goat without being thrown into the sea. It is a knowledge that knows only by being silent; it is the way of the heart that knows

by renouncing to know. The Jātaka thus becomes a silent door: it does not offer happiness, but consumes its false images, until, perhaps, the silence of the wheel coincides with the silence of the soul.

Video: https://youtu.be/L_nmOntytPc

78. Illīsa-jātaka

– The miser cared for by his father who reappears with his exact appearance and distributes his wealth.

Scene: The son's double gives everything; the shock frees him from attachment.

Daily life: Shock therapy that dismantles material fixations.

Jung: The encounter with the Double (the shadow Self), the dissolution of the avarice complex through specular imitation.

Plot

"Both of them focus." – This story was told by the Master during his stay in Jetavana, about a miserly and powerful Lord High Treasurer. According to what we are told, near the city of Rājagaha, there was a town called Jagghery, where lived a certain Lord High Treasurer, known as "the Miserly Millionaire", who possessed a fortune of eighty crores! Despite this, it did not give or consume even a minimal amount of oil that a single leaf could absorb. Therefore, he did not use his wealth either for his family, or for the sages and brahmans: it remained unused, like a lake infested with demons. On a certain day, the Master awoke at dawn, filled with compassion, and as he examined those who were ready for conversion in the universe, he realized that this Treasurer and his wife, located some four hundred miles away, were destined to follow the Paths of Salvation.

The day before, the Lord High Treasurer had left for the palace to meet the king, and was on his way home when he saw a farmer eating a cake filled with a cereal mixture. The sight made him crave the cake. However, once he got home, he thought, "If I was tempted to ask for a filled cake, a huge amount of people would want to share my meal. That would mean wasting a huge amount of rice and ghee and sugar. I don't have to say anything to anyone." So, he wandered around the house, fighting with his desire. As the hours passed, he grew paler and paler, and the veins appeared like ropes on his thin body. At last, she could bear it no longer, so she went to her room and lay down hugging the bed. However, he didn't say anything to anyone, for fear of wasting his resources! His wife, therefore, approached him and, caressing his back, asked him: "What is it, my husband?"

"Nothing," he replied. "Has the king been severe with you?" "No, it wasn't." "Did your children or servants do anything to annoy you?" "Nothing like that." "Well, then, do you have any particular wish?" But he still didn't utter a word – all because of his irrational fear of wasting his possessions; and so he found himself there, motionless in bed. 'Speak, my dear,' said his wife; "Tell me what you want." 'Yes,' he answered, with a sigh, 'I want a cake!' "But why didn't you say it right away? You're rich enough! I will bake enough cakes to feed the whole town of Jagghery." "Why bother? They have to work to earn food." "Well, I'll just prepare enough for our way." "How rich you are!" "Then, I'll prepare only enough for our house." "But how demanding you are!" "Well, I'll just cook for our kids." "Why bother with them?" 'Well, then, I'll cook just for the two of us,' said his wife.

"Cautiously," said the Lord High Treasurer; "There are many people who carefully observe this place looking for signs of cooking. Take the broken rice, being careful not to remove the whole grains, and take a stove and pots, along with a small amount of milk, ghee and honey and molasses; Then, go up to the seventh floor of the house, where you can cook in peace. There, myself, I will be present to taste what you have prepared."

Following his wishes, his wife took care of carrying all the necessary items, climbed to the top and sent the servants away, and sent a message to the Treasurer to call him. He climbed, closing and reinforcing every door as he advanced, until he reached the top floor, which he locked. Then he sat down. His wife lit a fire in the hearth, put the pot in and began to prepare desserts.

Now, at dawn, the Master had said to the Great Moggallāna: "Moggallāna, this rich man from Jagghery, near Rājagaha, who wishes to eat cakes, is so afraid that others will know about it, that he has ordered them to be prepared directly on the seventh floor. Go there; convince him to practice self-discipline, and with transcendental power, transport him and his wife, cakes, milk, ghee, and everything else you need, here in Jetavana. Today I and the five hundred disciples will stay at home, and I will provide them with a meal."

Obedient to the Master's orders, the old man, thanks to supernatural powers, found himself in the city of Jagghery and floated in mid-air in front of the bedroom window, suitably dressed in his inner and outer clothes, brilliant as a precious image. The unexpected sight of the old man made the Lord High Treasurer tremble with fear. He thought to himself, "It was just to avoid visitors like this that I came up here, and now there is one of them at the window!" And, not understanding the truth he had to understand, he roared with rage, as if sugar and salt had been thrown into the fire, exclaiming, "What will you achieve, sage, simply by floating in mid-air? You could walk back and forth until you create a path in the air with no way out – and yet, you won't achieve anything."

The old man began to walk back and forth in his airspace! 'What will you get by walking back and forth?' asked the Treasurer. "You can sit cross-legged in aerial meditation, but you won't achieve anything." The old man sat down cross-legged. Then the Treasurer said, "What will you get by sitting there? You can come and stand on the windowsill, but even that won't give you anything!" The old man leaned against the windowsill. "What will you get by leaning on the windowsill? After all, you can exhale smoke, and yet you will get nothing!" said the Treasurer. Then the old man exhaled smoke until he filled the whole palace. The Treasurer's eyes began to burn, as if they had been pointed by needles; and, fearing that his house might

catch fire, he paused before adding, "Even if you catch fire, you will get nothing." He thought to himself, "This old man is really tenacious! He will never give up without achieving anything!" "I just have to give him a cake," he said to his wife. "Darling, bake a little cake and give it to that wise man to make him go away."

So, he prepared a rather large amount of dough in a bowl. But the dough expanded and completely filled the bowl, becoming a huge cake! 'How much you must have used!' cried the Treasurer, seeing the cake. And, with the help of a spoon, he took a small amount and put it in the oven to bake it. But that small piece of dough grew more than the first; and, one after the other, each piece of dough he picked up became larger and larger. Then, discouraged, he said to his wife, "Bake a cake, darling." But as soon as his wife took one cake from the basket, all the others stuck to it. So she shouted to her husband that all the cakes had come together and that she could not separate them.

'Oh, I'll soon part them,' he said, but he realized he couldn't do it.

Then, both husband and wife took the pile of cakes in the corner by hand and tried to separate them. But, try as they might, they could not separate them as if they were individual. As the treasurer was trying to push the cakes away, he began to sweat, and his desire faded. Then, he turned to his wife and said, "I don't want these cakes; give them, together with the basket, to this ascetic." And she approached the old man with the basket in her hand. The elder, therefore, preached the truth to the couple, proclaiming the excellence of the Three Diamonds. By teaching that generosity is true sacrifice, he caused the fruits of charity and other good works to shine like the full moon in heaven. Convinced by the elder's words, the treasurer said, "Lord, come over and sit on this couch to eat cakes."

"Honourable Sweetheart," said the Old Man, "the Supreme Buddha, with five hundred disciples, is in the monastery waiting for a cake dinner. If you wish, I ask you to bring your wife and cakes, and accompany us to the Master." "But where, sir, is the Master at the moment?"

"That one is fifty leagues away, in the monastery of Jetavana." "How can we get to that place, sir, without wasting much time?" "If you wish, sir, I will take you there with my transcendent powers. The top of the stairs in your home will stay where it is, but the bottom will be located at the main entrance to Jetavana. In this way, I will bring you to the master in a reasonable time." 'All right, sir,' said the treasurer.

Then, the monk, holding the position of the staircase, ordered, "Let the base of the staircase be situated at the main entrance of Jetavana." And so it happened! In this way, the monk transported the treasurer and his wife to Jetavana faster than they could get off.

Then, the husband and wife came to Master and announced that it was time to eat. The Master, entering the refectory, sat down on the bench prepared for him, surrounded by his brothers. Then, the treasurer poured the sacred water on the hands of the brothers, with the Master at their head, while the treasurer's wife placed a cake in the offering vessel. From this, they took only what was sufficient to sustain life, as did the five hundred brothers. Subsequently, the treasurer went among the monks, offering milk mixed with ghee and cane sugar; and the Master and his brethren finished their meal. Finally, the treasurer and his wife ate their fill, but there seemed to be no end to this abundance of cakes. Even when all the monks and leftover gatherers in the monastery had received their share, there was no sign that the end was coming. Thus, they told the Master, "Lord, the supply of cakes does not diminish."

"Then, throw them at the great door of the monastery."

Then, they threw them into a cave not far from the entrance; and even today, in that area, there is a place called "The Crunchy", which is located at the end of that cave.

The Lord High Treasurer and his wife approached and stood in front of the Buddha, whom he thanked; And at the end of his words of thanksgiving, the couple experienced the first way of salvation. Subsequently, the

Lord High Treasurer donated a huge sum of money, amounting to eighty crores, entirely to the faith taught by the Buddha.

The next day, the Perfect Buddha, returning to Jetavana after a collection of offerings at Sāvatthi, gave a sermon to the monks before retiring to the perfumed room. In the evening, the monks assembled in the Hall of Truth, and exclaimed: "How great is the power of the monk Moggallāna! In an instant, he turned a miser into a giver, took him to Jetavana, introduced him to the Buddha, and guided him to salvation. How great is the power of this monk!" While they were thus discussing the monk's goodness, the master entered, and, after inquiring, was informed of the subject they were discussing. "Brethren," he said, "a monk who transforms a family, should approach that family without causing them any trouble or difficulty—just like a bee sucking nectar from a flower; in this way, he should approach to announce the excellence of the Buddha." And, in praise of the venerable Moggallāna, he recited this verse:

Like bees, which do not damage the aroma or color of any plant.

But, with its honey, it takes flight.

So, wise, as you walk through your village, follow this path.

Later, to further demonstrate the monk's goodness, he said: "Brethren, this is not the first time that the treasurer, known for his avarice, has been converted by Moggallāna. Even in the past, the monk had converted him and taught him how actions and their consequences are interconnected." So, he told this story from the past.

Once upon a time, when Brahmadatta reigned at Benares, there was a treasurer named Illīsa, who possessed eighty crores of rupees and who had all the defects that characterize man. He was lame, hunched and had a malformed eye; He was a miser, who never shared his wealth with others or even enjoyed it himself. His house was like a place haunted by demons. However, for seven generations, his ancestors had been generous, freely sharing their wealth. But, when he became treasurer, he broke his family's traditions. By destroying the treasure hall and driving the poor away with its doors, he has amassed his wealth.

One day, as he was returning from his post to the king, he saw a peasant, who had travelled a long time and looked tired, sitting on a bench, and filling a cup with a drink from a jar of strong liquor, and drinking it with a little taste of dried and very salty fish. The scene made the Treasury want to drink, but he thought to himself: "If I drink, others will want to drink with me too, and that would mean a huge expense." So, he walked, trying to quench his thirst. But, with the passage of time, he could no longer do so; He turned yellow like old cotton, and the veins were clearly visible on his sharp body. One day, returning to his room, he lay down hugging his bed. His wife came to him and massaged his back, asking, "What happened to my master?"

(The rest must be told in the words of the previous story). But when she answered, "Then I will only prepare enough for you," he said, "If you prepare the drink at home, there will be many people watching; And ask the merchants and drink here, it's out of the question." So, he pulled out a single penny and sent a slave to retrieve a bottle of liquor from the pub. When the slave returned, he sent him to deposit the bottle in an isolated place full of trees. "Now, go away!" he said, and he kept the slave waiting at some distance, while he filled his cup and prepared to drink.

Now, the treasurer's father, who by his charitable works and other good deeds had been reborn as Sakka in the Kingdom of the Gods, at that moment wondered if his fortune was still present, and he realized the interruption of his fortune and the behavior of his son. He saw how his son, breaking with the traditions of his house, had burned the almonyry, had driven out the poor, and how, through his avarice, fearing to share with others, that son had taken refuge in a wood to drink alone. Moved by this, Sakka said, "I will go to him and make my son understand that actions have their consequences; I will work for his conversion, and I will make him generous and worthy of a new birth in the Kingdom of the Gods." So Sakka came down to earth,

and again walked the streets of men, taking on the form of the treasurer Illīsa, with his lameness, his bent back and his cross-eyed gaze. In this capacity, he entered the city of Rājagaha and made his way to the palace gate, where he was ordered to announce his coming to the king. 'Let him in,' said the king, and the man went in and prostrated himself respectfully before his majesty.

"What brings you here at such an unusual hour, Lord High Treasurer?" asked the king. 'I have come, Sire, for I have eighty crores of wealth in my house. I beg you to have them transported to fill the royal chest.' "No, my Lord Treasurer; the wealth within my palace is greater than this." 'If he does not wish it, Sire, I will give it to whomever I will.' "Do so, Treasurer," said the king. "So be it, Sire," said the Illīsa, who deferentially departed. The servants gathered around him, but no one could understand that he was not their real master. Entering, he stopped at the threshold and called the porter, to whom he gave orders that, if anyone who looked like him should come forward and claim ownership of the house, he should scold him and kick him out. Then, going up the stairs to the upper floor, he sat down on a magnificent sofa and called to Illīsa's wife. When she arrived, he said with a smile, "Darling, let's make a toast."

"When they heard these words, his wife, children, and other servants thought, 'It has been a long time since he has behaved this way. Maybe he was drunk to be so kind and generous today." And his wife said to him, "Be as generous as you wish, my husband." "Call the messenger," he said, "and bid him announce by the sound of a drum that all who desire gold, silver, diamonds, pearls, and the like, must come to the house of Illīsa, the treasurer." His wife did as she bade him, and soon a great crowd gathered at the door, carrying baskets and sacks. Then Sakka ordered the treasure chambers to be opened, and cried out, "This is my gift to you; Take what you want and leave." And the crowd took possession of the treasures present, filling the bags and containers they had brought, and they went away, laden with the booty. Among them was an inhabitant of the same city, who had tied Illīsa's cows to his wagon, filled with the seven precious things, and had begun a journey out of the city along the main road. As he went on, he approached the wood, and praised the treasurer with these words: 'May you live a hundred years, my noble Illīsa! What you have done for me today will allow me to live without having to perform another action. Who did these cows belong to? "To you. Who did this wagon belong to? "To you. Who owned the wealth in the wagon? "Still to you. It was not a father or a mother who gave me all this; No, it was only from you, my lord.

These words filled the Lord High Treasurer with fear and trembling. "But, he's mentioning my name in his speech," she thought. "Could the king have distributed my wealth to the people?" Immediately, he moved away from the bush, recognizing his cattle and the wagon, the man jumped off the wagon, exclaiming angrily: "You, scoundrel! Illisa, the Lord High Treasurer, is distributing his wealth to the whole city. What brought you?" And he rushed at Illisa, striking him in the back like lightning, and drove away with the chariot. Illisa got up, trembling all over her body, wiped away the dirt and, chasing her wagon, took it again. Again, the man jumped down, grabbing Illisa by the hair, and hit him repeatedly on the head; then, seizing him by the throat, he threw him back in the direction from which he had come, and walked away. Illisa, shocked by this treatment, hurried home. There, seeing people walking away with the treasure, he began to hit one after the other, shouting, "Hey! What's going on? Is the king robbing me?" And every man he touched, he made him fall. Hurt and humiliated, he tried to take refuge in his house, but the doormen stopped him saying: "Listen, you rude! Where are you going?". And after hitting him with sticks, they chased him out of the house. "There is nothing left but the king to restore justice to me," groaned Illīsa, and went to the palace. "Why, oh why, my lord," he cried, "have you treated me this way?"

'No, it was not I, my lord,' said the king. "Wasn't it you yourself who came and declared your intention to give away your wealth, if I didn't accept? And did he not then send the messenger to carry out his threat?" 'Oh, my lord, it was not I who came to you with such a request. Your Majesty knows how close I am, and how much I don't give away even a drop of oil that a herb might absorb. I ask you to summon the person who gave my wealth, and to question him about it."

Then, the king summoned Sakka. And the two were so similar that neither the king nor his court could distinguish which was the real Lord High Treasurer. The misanthrope Illīsa said: "Who is, and what is it, sir, this Treasurer? I am the Treasurer."

"Well, I really can't say what Illīsa really is," said the king. "Is there anyone who can tell them apart for sure?" "Yes, my lord, my wife." So, the wife was called and asked which of the two was her husband. And she replied that Sakka was her husband and approached him. Then, in turn, Illīsa's sons and servants were called, and they all agreed, declaring that Sakka was the true Lord High Treasurer. At this point, Illīsa remembered that he had a wart on his head, hidden in his hair, the existence of which was known only to his barber. Therefore, as a last resort, he asked that his barber could be called to identify him. At that time, Bodhisatta was his barber. As a result, the barber was called and asked if...

"I can tell the truth from the false, Illīsa," he said. "I could examine their heads," he added. "Then, examine both heads," the king ordered. Immediately, Sakka developed a wart on his head! After examining the two heads, Bodhisatta stated that since they both had warts, he could not say for sure which of the two was the real man. And so, he uttered this verse:

Both lower their gaze; both stop; both are also curved back.

And both have their flaws, just like two coins with the same face.

I am not able to say which of the two is the real Illīsa.

After his last hope proved to be in vain, the Lord High Treasurer collapsed in a state of shock; and his unbearable grief at the loss of his precious riches led him to faint. At this point, Sakka manifested his transcendent powers, and, rising into the air, addressed the king with these words: "I am not Illīsa, O king, but Sakka." At this, those who were present took Illīsa's face and poured water for him. Regained, he stood on his own legs and knelt before Sakka, the king of the Devas. At this point, Sakka said, "Illīsa, the riches were mine, not yours. I am your father, and you are my son. Throughout my life, I have always been generous to the poor and have found joy in doing good; therefore, I was elevated to this elevated position and became Sakka. You, on the other hand, by not following my example, have become miserly and a real wretch; You have destroyed my treasure, you have driven away the poor and you have accumulated your wealth. You will not benefit from it, neither you nor any other man; However, your treasure has become like a demon-infested pit, where no one can quench its thirst. However, if you decide to rebuild my monastery and offer generosity to the poor, this will be considered as an act of justice towards you. But, if you don't, then I deprive you of everything you have, and I strike you with Indra's lightning, and you will die."

Faced with this threat, Illīsa, terrified, shouted: "From now on, I will be generous." Sakka accepted his promise, and, remaining suspended in heaven, instructed his son in the Decalogues and announced the Truth to him, and then left for his place of residence. Illīsa, in turn, devoted himself diligently to charity and other good works, thus securing a new life in heaven.

"Brethren," said the master, "it is not the first time that Moggallāna has converted the petty treasurer; in the past, the same man was converted by him." After concluding his lecture, he explained the connection and identified the birth by saying, "This petty treasurer was the Illisa of those days; Moggallāna was Sakka, the king of the gods, Ānanda was the king, and I myself the barber."

Synopsis of the plot

Illīsa, an extremely rich but stingy man, avoids any expense, denying food even to himself. One day he is seized by an irrepressible desire for focaccia, but in order not to share them with anyone, he asks his wife to cook it at the top of the highest tower of the house. The Buddha, sensing his spiritual maturity, sends the

elder Moggallāna. When the miser refuses to give him even a cake, they miraculously multiply, frustrating his greed. Moggallāna then transports the pair with the cakes to the Jetavana, where the Buddha teaches them and Illīsa reaches the first stage of salvation. In a previous life, Illīsa himself was cared for by his father reborn as the god Sakka, who, assuming his identical appearance, distributed all his wealth to the poor. The shock of seeing himself supplanted and robbed of his identity by the exact charitable "Double", and the impossibility of being recognized by anyone, freed him from his fixation, converting him to generosity.

Dramatic Structure

- Characters: Illīsa (the miser), Sakka (the deified father/Double), the king, the wife and servants, the barber (the Bodhisatta).

- Conflict: Illīsa's pathological attachment to wealth versus the karmic and spiritual necessity of generosity. The conflict is internalized when his "Double" expropriates him not only of his possessions, but of his own social and family identity.

- Turning point: The progressive crumbling of Illīsa's certainties. His wife, children, servants, and finally the last hope (the barber who knows his secret birthmark) all recognize the Double as the real Illīsa. The culminating turning point is the miraculous appearance of the birthmark even on the head of the Double, canceling out all distinctions.

- Outcome: Illīsa, collapsed in a delirium of anguish, comes to his senses in front of Sakka's revelation. The terror of the divine threat (Indra's lightning) and the shock of the dissolved identity lead him to accept the path of generosity, regaining a new, more authentic spiritual identity.

Explicit teaching

The story warns against avarice, showing it as a pathology that isolates, destroys joy and denies the natural law of karma. The stated teaching is that wealth not enjoyed or shared is like a pond infested with demons. True prosperity lies in generosity (dāna), which is a sacrifice that bears fruit in this life and in future lives.

Implicit teaching

Therapy cannot be only external. Illīsa is "cured" only when his mental fixation is externalized and faced by an external instance that nullifies it. The story suggests that vice is not just a mistake, but a distortion of identity. To dismantle it, a moral command is not enough; A "shock therapy" is needed that forces the individual to look at his own shadow projected outside himself, in a living mirror. Attachment dissolves when the Self sees itself from the outside and recognizes the emptiness of its own egoic construction.

Relationship with the Sage and Level II

This Jātaka is the pivot of Level II – The Shadow and its double: unmasking the masks of vice. Illīsa embodies the mask of the miser, a psychic complex that has replaced his true nature. The cure does not come from a sermon, but from the traumatic encounter with the Double, an archetypal figure who in the essay is linked to the Jungian shadow Self. The mirror imitation operated by Sakka is perfect: he unmasks the mask by showing its senselessness. As a "bridge to Level III", the story prepares the ground for the apophatic dimension: when Illīsa's rational mind surrenders (it cannot distinguish the true from the false), a space of non-knowledge opens up which is the prelude to transformation. His identity dissolves, and a new consciousness can emerge from that void.

Compelling anecdotes: Jung, everyday life and apophases

1 "The Double Gallery"

that is: When your obsession looks at you from the outside, you can no longer pretend not to see it.

Imagine a compulsive collector whose house is uninhabitable, suffocated by objects. The family, exasperated, stages a reality show: while he is out, they empty the house, catalog everything and arrange it in an art gallery with his name, titling the installation "The life you have never enjoyed". Upon his return, he finds a double of his house, clean and bare. The friend who welcomes him, pretending to be unaware, shows him the "exhibition" of donated objects. The shock of seeing one's obsession exhibited as the work of a stranger can trigger a salvific crisis, making him see his "treasures" no longer as extensions of himself, but as a burden.

The image presents a composition based on strong contrast.

On the left dominates a large glass case, similar to those in contemporary museums. Inside there is an impressive mass of objects: books, paintings, suitcases, knick-knacks, boxes, photographs, small furniture, memories. The whole appears almost chaotic, but at the same time carefully set up as an art installation.

In front of the display case, an elegant man, dressed in black, opens his arms like a curator presenting a masterpiece. His ambiguous smile suggests that he knows something that the other character still ignores.

On the right, in the foreground, a second man observes the scene from behind. He is the real protagonist. His posture is motionless, almost paralyzed by amazement.

Beyond the open door appears a completely empty space: a white room, illuminated by a window. It is essential, silent, almost ascetic.

The whole image lives on the tension between these two worlds:

accumulation and vacuum;

darkness and light;

imprisonment and openness.

Jungian symbolic analysis

The image visualizes a process of objectification of the Shadow.

According to Jung, as long as a psychic content remains identified with the Ego, it cannot be seen.

Here, however, something decisive happens. The obsession is moved out of the subject. It becomes an object of contemplation. The collector is no longer immersed in his objects: now he looks at them. It is the birth of psychological distance.

The glass case plays a fundamental role. Glass separates. It does not prevent you from seeing. It only prevents you from possessing. This is precisely the therapeutic step. Obsession loses its character of identity and becomes an observable phenomenon.

The Double

The title "The Double Gallery" emerges spontaneously from the composition. In fact, we do not see two people. We see two versions of the same consciousness. The man from behind represents the ego. The collection represents its outsourced double. The man who presents the exhibition almost assumes the Jungian function of the trickster, the one who leads the protagonist in front of his own truth without imposing it. He does not judge. Exhibition.

Apophatic reading

From the point of view of negative theology, the real protagonist is not accumulation. It is emptiness. The white room on the right side becomes the most powerful symbol of the entire image. It contains nothing. And precisely for this reason it contains possibilities.

In the apophatic tradition, God is not encountered through possession, but through self-despoiling. Emptiness is not lack. It's availability.

The image seems to suggest:

As long as you inhabit the house full of your belongings, you cannot inhabit yourself.

Buddhist Reading (Illīsa-jātaka)

The connection with the Illīsa-jātaka is surprisingly natural. In the Buddhist tale, the protagonist is unable to enjoy his riches. They end up possessing him. The image translates this insight visually. The objects are numerous. Yet no one is touched. They are behind the glass. They are now unusable. Wealth becomes exposure. Not life.

Narrative composition

The viewer's eye follows a precise path:

1. enters from the figure of the observer;

2. is attracted by the mass of objects;

3. meet the presenter;

4. finally discovers the empty room.

It is a symbolic journey.

Solid...

... to emptiness.

A particularly successful detail

The contrast between the display case and the white room produces an almost initiatory effect.

The display case looks like a mausoleum.

The room looks like a monastic cell.

The first preserves the past.

The second opens up the future.

Improvements

Anecdote even closer to the original text with some elements:

* the protagonist shows an expression of genuine shock, instead of simple contemplation;

* the gallery has an even more museum character, with pedestals and exhibition lighting;

* the objects are catalogued with an almost obsessive order, emphasizing the transition from private accumulation to public finding;

* The "double" is suggested with a reflection in the glass, so that the protagonist sees himself literally superimposed on his collection.

Concluding Comment

The image manages to express with considerable force the central paradox of the anecdote: the obsession becomes visible only when it stops coinciding with identity. The display case transforms possession into

spectacle, forcing the protagonist to look at his own life as if it belonged to someone else. In this distance the possibility of awakening arises.

The deepest element, however, is the empty room in the background. It does not appear as a simple absence, but as a silent invitation. In Jungian terms, it represents the space in which the ego can disidentify itself from its complexes; in an apophatic key, it is the place where meaning emerges precisely when attachments cease. Thus the image does not only tell of liberation from a compulsion, but suggests an inner itinerary: from the prison of accumulation to the freedom of the fruitful void.

Story: The Double Gallery

Marco Ferretti returned home on a Tuesday in October, with his leather briefcase and the smell of another continent still on him. He found the door ajar and no noise. No ticking of antique clocks, no creaking of trunks, no scent of old brass that for thirty years had greeted his every return.

Inside, a perfect void. The corridors that were once trenches between boxes and shop windows were now as wide as dance floors. The floor, which he had not seen for years, shone.

"Marco." His brother-in-law Aldo was on the threshold of the kitchen, his hands in his pockets, his face composed in an expression of fake surprise that Marco knew well from forty years of friendship. "Welcome back. There's one thing you have to see."

The shock settled on his stomach like a stone. "Where are my things?"

"I'll take you there."

He drove for twenty minutes in silence, Aldo humming softly, Marco clutching the steering wheel as if he could snatch it. They stopped in front of a glass and concrete building, a converted former industrial warehouse, with an elegant sign: CONTEMPORARY GALLERY — East Wing.

Inside, warm museum lights. A thirty-meter-long glass wall, illuminated from above, housed thousands of objects — his objects — arranged on white pedestals, cataloged, labeled with printed tags: *Brass casket, late 1800s, unknown provenance. Equestrian statuette, bronze, nineteenth century. Table clock, Junghans mechanism, 1910.

At the entrance, a huge panel: "THE LIFE YOU HAVE NEVER ENJOYED" — Collective installation by the F.

Marco remained motionless in front of the glass. His reflection overlapped the windows, his ghostly face among the treasures accumulated in a life of solitude and fear of emptiness. He brought his hands to his mouth. He could no longer distinguish where he ended and where the collection began.

"We did it for you," Aldo said softly. "You had to see them from the outside. You had to see how much they weigh, when you don't carry them."

Marco cried, there, in front of thirty years of his life exposed as archaeological finds of a dead man. But it wasn't shame that broke him. It was the relief — sudden, physical, almost painful — of looking at those objects and no longer feeling their weight on you.

"I can... Can I leave them here?" he asked, in a faint voice.

"They remain on display for a year," replied Aldo. "Then everything is sold at auction, to charity. As you wanted."

"I never wanted this."

Aldo smiled, genuine for the first time. "You wrote it yourself, Marco. Six months ago, drunk, at dinner. 'If one day I become so obsessive that I no longer recognize myself, strip me of everything and show it to me from the outside.' You made us sign it on a napkin. I still have it."

Marco Ferretti once again looked at his life in the window — and for the first time in thirty years, he smiled at a double who finally no longer looked like him.

2 The manager and the opportunity cost of pleasure

There is a successful manager who, after twenty years of career, cannot order a second course without mentally calculating the "opportunity cost" of every euro spent. Sitting in the restaurant, while the diners chat, he stares at the menu like a company balance sheet: each course is a losing investment. If he spends thirty euros on a dinner, he immediately thinks about how much they would earn in an index fund in ten years. He returns home satiated in body but emptied in soul, with a subtle sense of guilt that he cannot name. It is not poverty: it is the Person of the "efficient manager" who has swallowed up man, transforming every act into a transaction. Like Illīsa on her golden bed, she possesses everything but enjoys nothing. His Shadow is not the avarice of money, but the inability to receive life without measuring it. When a friend asks him: "Have you ever allowed yourself something without asking yourself how much it costs you?", the manager is silent. In that silence, for an instant, the apophatic dimension opens up: what is missing is not money, it is surrender to gratuitousness.

The image, while not illustrating every literal detail of the text, manages to visually translate the inner conflict of the protagonist, favoring the psychological dimension over the narrative one.

The scene is set in an elegant restaurant, illuminated by warm and soft lights. In the center of the composition sits a man in a dark suit, probably a middle-aged manager. He is slightly bent forward, with his hand on his

chin in a gesture of intense concentration. His gaze is turned towards the menu, but the impression is that he is not really reading: he seems rather a prisoner of his own thoughts.

On the table there are:

the open menu;

a glass of wine almost intact;

a glass of water;

a calculator;

a professional diary or folder;

bread not yet consumed.

Behind him, the other customers smile, converse and seem to live the convivial moment serenely. They are deliberately blurred, while the protagonist is perfectly in focus.

Through the windows you can see a modern night city.

Symbolic analysis

The image builds a series of very effective contrasts.

1. The protagonist is still, the world lives. Everyone seems to be attending the dinner. Only he is motionless. This immediately suggests that the problem is not external. Prison is mental. This is precisely what the anecdote tells.

2. The calculator is probably the strongest symbol. In the text, the manager continuously calculates the opportunity cost. The image translates this idea by making the calculator a real character in the scene. It's almost an extension of his mind. Not really needed during a dinner. It serves symbolically. It becomes the icon of rationality that colonizes every experience.

3. The menu as a balance. The menu occupies the center of the gaze. It does not appear as a promise of pleasure. Instead, it resembles a financial document. The image is therefore able to transform an everyday object into an economic symbol.

4. Wine not drunk. The glass of wine is still full. This detail is very interesting. The pleasure is present. But he is not received. It's the visual equivalent of the phrase, "He owns everything but enjoys nothing."

5. Other customers. They are blurry. They do not represent specific people. They almost seem to embody life itself. Life goes on. He laughs. He shares. Eat. The protagonist, on the other hand, remains excluded.

Jungian reading

From a Jungian point of view, the image works very well.

The Person

The elegant dress.

The folder.

The compound posture.

Precision.

Everything speaks of the Person of the efficient manager. This Person has succeeded perfectly. Too successful. It has occupied the entire psychic space.

The Shadow

In the text it is said that the Shadow is not avarice. The image confirms this intuition. We don't see a stingy man. We see a man unable to relax. The Shadow here is much more subtle. It is the inability to let oneself live.

Selflessness

The protagonist appears completely identified with the rational function. The other Jungian functions seem to be suspended:

feeling;

pleasure;

the body;

the game;

spontaneity.

Consciousness has become almost exclusively calculation.

Apophatic reading

It's perhaps the most interesting part. The image shows almost exclusively objects.

Menu.

Calculator.

Agenda.

Glasses.

Cutlery.

Everything is measurable.

What is missing is precisely what the text is about:

the gift;

gratuitousness;

joy;

abandonment.

Apophase is not directly represented here. It is evoked through an absence. It is what the image lacks. And it is precisely this lack that becomes significant. The silence of the protagonist, expressed by his collected face

and immobility, suggests that inner space in which the decisive question could emerge: what cannot be calculated?

Reference to the Illīsa-jātaka

The connection with the Buddhist narrative emerges in a subtle but convincing way.

Like Illīsa:

possesses wealth;

it lives in abundance;

He frequents refined places.

But he remains unable to enjoy what he has. Wealth becomes sterile. There is no shortage of food. Inner freedom is lacking.

Image with some additional symbolic elements:

a second course just indicated on the menu, to evoke the choice he cannot make;

a slight graphic overlap of formulas, graphs or numbers that seem to emerge from his mind, visualizing the "opportunity cost";

a more marked contrast between the convivial warmth of the other tables and the emotional "bubble" of the protagonist;

A small gesture of a diner who invites him to participate, while he remains absorbed, making the distance between relationship and calculation even more evident.

Overall Rating

The image is successful because it avoids didactic illustration and chooses a cinematographic language. The composition, the depth of field and the props converge to tell a form of silent alienation: the manager is not oppressed by the lack of resources, but by the inability to receive the present as a gift. In this sense, photography dialogues effectively both with Jung's psychology (the Person who suffocates the Self) and with the apophatic perspective, where the truth is glimpsed not through what is shown, but through what is missing. It is precisely this absence that makes the central theme of the anecdote visible: the transition from a life reduced to a transaction to a willingness to be free.

Story: The Cost of Free

Marco looked at the menu like a board of directors looks at a budget in the red. Around him, invisible to the other diners, his mind floated: graphs that went up, formulas of compound capitalization, a sphere of numbers that isolated him from the rest of the world like a glass bubble.

Beef fillet, 30 euros.

He could not see the flesh, the embers, the perfume. He saw 63,417 euros in ten years, calculated at seven percent. He saw the Shadow of his efficiency: a man who had learned to multiply everything, except joy.

Elena, in front of him, laughed with her friends at the next table, the glass of wine suspended in mid-air. Then he turned to him and asked him the question that had been chasing him for weeks:

"Have you ever allowed yourself something without asking yourself how much it costs you?"

Marco did not answer. In the silence that followed, something opened up — not a thought, but the absence of a thought. Like Illīsa, the rich miser of the legend, who owned golden palaces and starved to death for fear of sharing a spoonful of rice, Marco possessed every financial projection of his future and could not own the present.

He closed the menu decisively. "I'll take the seafood salad. Twenty-two euros. It's still a saving."

Elena smiled, but not at the irony he imagined.

The bill came after coffee. The waiter placed it, closed in a black leather folder, exactly in the center of the table. Marco stretched out his hand to open it — he wanted to calculate the optimal tip, the exact percentage, the umpteenth balance of the evening.

Elena stopped his hand.

"I've already paid for it. Before I arrived. Everything, including what you didn't order."

Marco remained motionless. He didn't understand.

"I paid for the beef tenderloin," she said, "anyway. I wanted to see you choose something knowing it wouldn't cost you anything. And you chose the cheapest dish anyway."

The bubble of numbers, the graphs, the compound interest formula — everything vanished in an instant, like a dull projection. There had been no opportunity cost. There had only been one man who, in front of the free, had continued to calculate a price that did not exist.

The apophatic dimension was not what he lacked. It was right there, offered, and he had refused it out of habit.

He stood with his fork in mid-air, the now cold fillet he hadn't ordered, wondering for the first time in twenty years what the price really was for not knowing how to receive.

3 The farewell party without guests

A woman loses her job after fifteen years in the same company. She was a director, respected, feared. In the corridors everyone greeted her. On the day of his dismissal, he mentally organizes a dinner to thank "his" collaborators. Then check WhatsApp: no messages. LinkedIn scrolls: the colleagues who commented on each of his posts now scroll away without a like. He tries to write to what he called "my right arm": he visualizes and does not respond. In a week, silence swallows fifteen years of relationships. He sits on the sofa and for the first time asks himself: "Who am I, without my role?" The question is an abyss. He has no answer. Yet, precisely in that void, something breathes. The Professional Person has collapsed, but the collapse has opened up a space that was previously saturated with definitions. Like Illīsa in front of the Double that everyone recognizes except him, the woman discovers that social identity was a loan, not a possession. The apophatic dimension does not offer it a new definition: it gives it the possibility of dwelling in the indefinite, where what is essential has not yet a name.

The image communicates the symbolic core of the story: the dissolution of social identity and the appearance of an inner space that can no longer be defined by the role. While not literally illustrating every detail of the text, it translates its psychological and apophatic meaning into a visual language full of references.

The scene is set in a modern apartment during the evening. In the center of the composition a woman sits on the sofa, slightly bent forward. His gaze is fixed on his mobile phone, illuminated by its cold light. The expression is suspended between disbelief, sadness and bewilderment.

Numerous symbolic elements appear around her:

a box with photographs that seem to belong to the professional past;

a white mask shattered on the coffee table;

a table set with glasses and plates that no one really occupies;

in the background blurred human figures, almost ghosts, separated from the protagonist by a reflective or veiled surface.

Light is divided into two registers:

the warm one of the household lamp;

the cold one of the smartphone and the night city beyond the window.

This double illumination accentuates the contrast between interiority and exteriority.

Jungian analysis

From Carl Gustav Jung's point of view, the scene almost perfectly represents the collapse of the Person. The Person is the social mask that allows the individual to function in the world.

In the story the woman was:

director;

respected;

recognized;

feared.

In the image all this is now absent.

The broken mask on the table is probably the most powerful symbol of the composition. It is not simply a broken mask. It is the Person who can no longer sustain identity.

Jung observed that many psychological crises begin precisely when the ego completely coincides with one's social role. When the role disappears, the subject seems to disappear as well.

The telephone as a mirror of emptiness

The smartphone becomes the new oracle. The woman seeks confirmation. It can't find messages. It is not recognized. He finds no answer. The screen illuminates the face but reveals nothing. It is a light without knowledge.

This is a very contemporary representation of the archetypal need to be recognized by the other.

The figures in the background

They are perhaps the most disturbing element. They are not really present. They seem like memories. Or projections. Or even the social world that continues to exist without the protagonist. Their blurring suggests that relationships built solely on role do not possess autonomous consistency.

They are shadows. They appear alive only as long as the Person is recognized.

The set table

In the original text, the woman imagines a thanksgiving dinner. The image translates this fantasy. The table is ready. The glasses are full. The guests, however, do not exist. The party is already over before it starts. It is an image of contemporary loneliness.

The box of photographs

The box seems to contain what remains of the previous identity. Photographs are memory. But they are also testimony to a narrative that is now over. The ego tends to keep them as proof of its existence. The apophatic dimension, on the other hand, suggests that no image can definitively define what we are.

Apophatic reading

Here the image goes beyond simple psychology. The question of the text is: "Who am I without my role?"

The image does not try to answer. This is precisely the apophatic gesture. The tradition of negative theology teaches that the deepest truth emerges when definitions cease. The protagonist does not receive a new identity. He receives silence. And it is precisely that silence that the image renders through the empty spaces of the room.

The symbol of the broken mask

From a symbolic point of view, it is the hidden center of the composition. The mask can simultaneously represent:

the Jungian Persona;

the corporate role;

social recognition;

the face that others saw.

Being broken, it can no longer be worn. But precisely for this reason it becomes possible to see the authentic face.

The relationship with the Illīsa-jātaka

The connection with the Illīsa-jātaka is particularly successful. In the Buddhist story everyone recognizes the Double while the real Illīsa suddenly loses his public identity. Something similar happens here. The woman discovers that her "being a director" belonged more to the gaze of others than to herself. When that gaze vanishes, the constructed identity also dissolves. The image translates this theme through the absence of interlocutors.

The figures are there. But they are unattainable.

Improved aspects of the image

New version of the image that incorporates improvements, including:

an office box with badges, director's plate, documents and personal items that have just been emptied;

a smartphone with the visual impression of unanswered chats and no notifications;

an environment that recalls the transition from the office to the home;

a large mirror or a reflecting surface with a Double of the protagonist, inspired by the Illīsa-jātaka;

the mask of the Person even more central and symbolic, cracked at the woman's feet;

the dinner table set but completely empty, with chairs arranged as if waiting for guests who will not arrive;

a cinematic, realistic atmosphere, with warm domestic light contrasted with the cold light of the smartphone and the night city;

a strong reference to the crisis of the Jungian Person and to the apophatic openness to the indefinable.

Overall Rating

The image is very effective because it does not simply tell of a dismissal: it stages an ontological crisis. The real protagonist is not the loss of the job, but the moment in which external recognition dissolves and the ego remains without definition. In Jungian terms, it is the fracture of the Person; In apophatic terms, it is the entrance into a void that is not mere deprivation, but possibility. The silent room, the shattered mask, the table without guests and the evanescent figures converge in suggesting that what seemed to constitute identity was actually a borrowing of the gaze of others. Only when that loan is withdrawn can the search for what has not yet a name begin.

Story

3. The farewell party without guests

Marta looks at the clock: 11:12 pm. On the table, the ceramic mask he had kept on his desk for twenty years — a gift from a Venetian customer — lies in fragments, fallen off when he emptied the box in an irritated gesture. White, cracked, she still seems to be smiling between the shards.

He had imagined everything: a restaurant, toasts, Elena — his deputy, his faithful shadow for eight years — raising her glass and saying something sincere in front of everyone. Instead, the phone remains silent. She wrote first, of course: "Guys, thank you very much for these years, I would like to greet you properly". Two blue ticks out of twelve recipients. Zero answers.

A week passes. Then two. The likes under her photos, which used to arrive in clusters within the first few minutes, have dried up. Elena saw the message on Tuesday at 9:47 a.m. — the status says so — and didn't write a line.

Sitting on the sofa, in the reflection of the mirror she sees a double: a woman in a dark suit, her hair badly tied up, the face of someone who has stopped controlling how she looks. Behind her, through the glass, the dining room is set for a dinner she will never make, cutlery lined up for imaginary guests.

"Who am I, without my role?" he asks. No one answers, not even herself. It is a question that he has never had time to ask himself in fifteen years of meetings, decisions, performance reviews. The Person — the one carefully constructed, polished every morning like the mask on the table — crumbled along with the rest.

The phone lights up. Her heart tightens: maybe Elena, finally.

It is his daughter Sara. "Mom, are you awake? I had a fight with Marco, can I come to you tonight?"

Marta stares at the screen. Sara, twenty-three, who had never asked to sleep with her once in the last five — too busy, she always said, with her life in New York. And yet now, right now, he writes to her.

He answers: "Come. I'm waiting for you."

Only after pressing enter does he realize one thing: he has not thought for a second about Elena, his colleagues, his lost job. For the first time in a week, emptiness is no longer scary. There is someone knocking, and it is real.

Look at the fragments of the mask on the table. It does not collect them. She leaves them there, white against the dark wood, like the bones of something she no longer needs.

Carousel table. 78. Illīsa-jātaka with Jungian integration

Slide	Title	Scene / Visual Description	Narrative anecdote (Jātaka 78)	Jungian Reference / Psychological Anecdote and Apophatic Dimension
1	**The Prison of the Self**	A yellowish, emaciated man huddled on a golden bed in a dark room, while high up on a tower, a small light shines.	Illīsa, despite having eighty crores of wealth, denies herself a cake so as not to share it. He lies silent in his bed, consumed by desire and fear of spending.	**The Person and the Shadow:** Illīsa is identified with the mask of the "rich man", but his Shadow is the avarice that devours him. The anecdote: a manager who, after years of success, can't enjoy a dinner out without calculating the mental "opportunity cost", feeling

Slide	Title	Scene / Visual Description	Narrative anecdote (Jātaka 78)	Jungian Reference / Psychological Anecdote and Apophatic Dimension
				guilty for every euro spent on pleasure.
2	**The Double's Breakthrough**	Illīsa looks terrified out of the window. Outside, suspended in mid-air, a being of shining light with his *identical* features, smiles serenely.	Moggallāna (or Sakka) appears with the exact appearance of the miser, but with an attitude of absolute freedom. The identity of the miser is "stolen" by a higher authority that embodies his own unexpressed potential.	**The encounter with the Shadow-Self:** The archetype of the Double bursts in as a mirror image that realizes what the Ego does not dare. It is a necessary and terrifying comparison. **apophasis:** The apparition is a mystery. It is not a manageable psychological projection, but an event that "holds" an elusive, unspeakable meaning.
3	**The unexpected multiplication**	A tiny flatbread in an oven explodes in size, filling the entire room with a warm, golden light, burying Illīsa and his wife.	Illīsa orders to cook a tiny focaccia, but it grows out of proportion. Every attempt to control the situation fails: the buns stick together in an inextricable mass. His wish is granted in an absurd way, mocking his logic.	**Enantiodromia:** Extreme psychic tension turns into its opposite. The attempt to control generates chaos. **Apophasis:** The "phenomenon" of the focaccia is not rationally explained; it is guarded as a sign that is silent and resounds, a surplus of meaning that annihilates the avaricious calculation.
4	**The court of identity**	In a royal court, two identical Illīsa are standing. His wife, children, servants are all on their knees in front of the Double, with their backs to the real Illīsa, who screams in despair.	The family and servants, put to the test, all recognize the Double as the true husband and master. The last hope is the barber, keeper of the secret of desire.	**The unmasked complex:** Illīsa's identity was not based on essence, but on a possession complex. When possession is alienated, identity dissolves. The anecdote: a person who loses his job and discovers that his "friendships" were only network contacts. "Who am I, without my role?".
5	**The surrender of knowledge**	A barber carefully examines the heads of both Illīsa. A close-up shows two identical birthmarks in her hair. The barber raises his hands, helpless.	The Bodhisatta-barber, the only hope, declares: "Both are limping, both are hunched over, both have a birthmark! I can't tell who the real Illīsa is." The logical distinction is impossible.	**Apophatic knowledge:** The barber does not "explain", but recognizes the impossibility of distinction. It is the culmination of the via negationis. The mystery is not solved, but accepted. The conceptual mind gives up. "Familiar" not because it has been identified, but because it has been silent and resonated within everyone.

Slide	Title	Scene / Visual Description	Narrative anecdote (Jātaka 78)	Jungian Reference / Psychological Anecdote and Apophatic Dimension
6	**Death and birth**	Illīsa faints, falling backwards like a crumbling statue. Above, the luminous figure of Sakka hovers in the air, from one hand a ray of light reaches the heart of the man on the ground.	Illīsa collapses in a delirium of anguish. When he wakes up, the Truth is revealed to him: the Double is his father, who has come to save him. The threat of total destruction (lightning) and the grace of revelation convert him.	**Transformation and Individuation:** The symbolic death of the ego (fainting) is a prelude to rebirth. Illīsa is free from the "avarice complex" because he has experienced its dissolution. Shock therapy has done the work: material fixation is dismantled not by reason, but by the experience of a shock that transcends every name, dream and conceptual door.

The Double as hierophany: Jung, the Shadow and the apophatic silence

In Jungian terms, Sakka is the Self that breaks into Illīsa's egoic inflation. Illīsa is completely identified with his Person as a rich landowner. The Double that appears is not an enemy, but the living projection of the Shadow – its avarice – and the Self – its generous potentiality – fused together into a single figure. The resulting shock is "enantiodromia", the inversion into the opposite: the pathological accumulation is reversed into a total dissipation that mimics generosity, unmasking the absurdity of attachment.

Illīsa cannot fight the Double, because he would fight himself. He must surrender to the incomprehensible. And this is where the apophatic dimension opens up: no psychological explanation can exhaust the mystery of the Double. His appearance is a hierophany, a manifestation of the sacred that does not allow itself to be conceptualized.

The barber, the Bodhisatta, is the one who establishes this mystery: he cannot distinguish. His is a "knowledge without concept". Illīsa's salvation begins when he stops trying to "understand" who the real Illīsa is and accepts the terrifying amazement of a reality that dissolves his ego.

Video: https://youtu.be/3VXp3PnE3vg

Level III – Beyond the Veil: Dream, Heart and Apophatic Path

The last step turns the gaze inwards and then beyond any form. Dreams reveal hidden truths, the name loses value compared to the heart, and the paths of spiritual well-being become "doors" that cannot be described, only crossed. It is the apophatic dimension, where language stops.

77. Mahāsupina-jātaka

– Sixteen wonderful dreams and their interpretation.

Scene: The king tells enigmatic dreams; the Bodhisatta deciphers them as signs of collective destiny.

Daily life: The importance of listening to dreams to orient oneself in crises.

Jung: Big (archetypal) dreams as revealers of the future of the psyche and community. It leads to the collective unconscious.

Story

"First the elephants, then the trees." – This story was told by the master during his stay in Jetavana, in relation to sixteen wonderful dreams. In fact, according to tradition, the king of Kosala, who had slept all night, had sixteen grandiose dreams, and woke up in terror and alarm, worried about what they might mean for him. The fear of death was so strong that he could not move, but sat in his bed. When the night began to light up, his brahmans and advisors approached him and, with due deference, asked him if he had slept well.

'How could I sleep well, my lords?' replied the king. "As soon as dawn I had sixteen wonderful dreams, and since then I have been in a state of terror! Tell me, my lords, what all these things mean."

"It will be possible to judge them once we hear about them."

Then, the king told them about his dreams, and asked them what the consequences of such visions would be on him.

The Brahmins limped their hands! "Why do you slap your hands, Brahmins?" asked the king. "Because, my lord, these are cursed dreams." "What will be the result?" asked the king. "One of three: damage to your kingdom, your life, or your wealth." "Is there a solution, isn't there?" he asked. "Certainly, these dreams are so threatening that they cannot be solved; However, we will still find a solution. Otherwise, what is the point of all this study and learning?" "So, what do you propose to do to avoid danger?" he asked. "Wherever four roads meet, we will offer a sacrifice, my lord," replied the Brahmins, full of excitement. And, assuring the king that he should not be afraid, they left the palace. Outside the city, they dug a sacrificial well and collected a large quantity of quadrupedal animals, perfect and without defects, and an enormous amount of birds. However, they kept discovering something missing, and they repeatedly returned to the king to ask this and that. Now, the actions of these men were under the watchful eye of Queen Mallikā, who went to the king and asked him what motivated these Brahmins to turn to him.

'I envy you,' said the king; "A snake in the ear, and you won't know it!" "What does your majesty mean?" "I dreamed, oh, what unfortunate dreams! The Brahmins tell me that they point to one of the three calamities; and they are eager to offer sacrifices to avoid evil. And that's what brings them here so often." "But has your majesty consulted the Chief Brahmin of both this world and that of the devas?" 'Who, I pray you, can it be, my dear?' asked the king. "Do you not know that most important person in the world, the omniscient and pure, the immaculate master-Brahmin? Surely, he, the Blessed One, will understand your dreams. Go, ask him." 'And so I will do, my queen,' said the king. And he walked away towards the monastery, greeted the Master and sat down. 'What, I pray you, brings your majesty here so early in the morning?' asked the Master in his sweet voice. 'Sir,' said the king, 'just before dawn I dreamed sixteen wonderful dreams, which terrified me so much that I told them to the Brahmins. They told me that my dreams foreshadowed evil, and that to avoid the threatened calamity they must offer sacrifices wherever four roads met. And so they are busy with their preparations, and many living creatures have the fear of death before their eyes. But I beg you, who are the most important person in the world of men and devas, in whose knowledge comes every possible knowledge of things past and present and of the future, please tell me what will come from my dreams, O Blessed One."

"It is true, sire, that there is no one else but me who can say what your dreams mean, or what will come of them. I'll tell you. Only first of all tell me your dreams as they appeared to you."

'I will do it, sir,' said the king, and at once began this list, following the order of the appearance of dreams:

First the bulls, and the trees, and the cows, and the calves,

Horse, plate, rinse, water pot,

A pond, raw rice and sandalwood,

And pumpkins that sank, and stones that swam,

With frogs devouring black snakes,

A raven with a retinue with cheerful feathers,

And the wolves panic-afraid of goats!

'How did it happen, sir, that I had the following dream? In my opinion, four black bulls, similar to eye drops in hue, came from the four cardinal directions towards the royal court with an avowed intention of fighting; and the people gathered to watch the bullfight, until a great crowd gathered. But the bulls just made a fight

scene, roared and screamed, and at last walked away without a fight at all. This was my first dream. What will come out of it?"

"Sire, that dream will have no problem in your days or mine. But from now on, when kings are mean and unjust, and when the people are unjust, in the days when the world is perverted, when good is diminishing and evil is growing rapidly, in those days when the world is coming back no rain will fall from heaven, the feet of the storm will be limping, the crops will wither, and famine will come upon the earth. Then the clouds will gather as if by rain from the four quarters of the sky; there will first be a hurry to bring the rice and crops that the women have scattered in the sun to dry them into the house, for fear that the harvest will get wet; and then, with the spade and basket in hand, the men will go to fill the dams. As a sign of impending rain, thunder will boom, lightning will shine from the clouds, but like the bulls in your dream, who have not fought, so the clouds will flee without rain. This is what will come from this dream. But nothing bad will happen; Because it was about the future that you dreamed of this dream. What the Brahmins told you, was told only to make a living." And when the Master had done it. He related the fulfillment of this dream, said, "Tell me your second dream, sire."

'Sir,' said the king, 'my second dream was like this: Little trees and shrubs burst out of the ground, and when they had grown scarcely one or two doomed, they bloomed and bore fruit! This was my second dream; What will become of it?"

"Sire," said the Master, "this dream will come true in the days when the world has fallen into decay and when men are short-lived. In the times to come, passions will be strong; very young girls will go to live with men, and with them, in the manner of women, they will conceive and have children. Flowers represent their problems, and fruits represent their offspring. But you, sire, have nothing to fear from this. Tell me your third dream, O great king.'

"I thought, sir, that I saw cows sucking the milk of calves that had given birth that same day. This was my third dream. What will become of it?"

"This dream will also only take its place in the days to come, when respect will cease to be rendered with age. Because in the future men, without showing respect for parents or in-laws, will themselves administer the family patrimony and, if they wish, will donate food and clothing to the elderly, but they will deny their gifts, if it is not their pleasure to donate. Then the elderly, destitute and dependent, will exist for the benefit of their children, like large cows suckled by day-old calves. But you have nothing to fear about this. Tell me your fourth dream."

"It has come to me, sir, that I saw men unhooking a team of draft oxen, strong and strong, and putting young steers to pull the load; and the steers, proving incapable of the task in charge, refused and remained motionless, so that the tentacles did not move on their way. This was my fourth dream. What will become of it?"

"Here again the dream will not come true until the future, in the days of unrighteous kings. For in the days to come, unjust and petty kings will not show honor to wise lords who are skilled in the former, fertile in opportunity, and able to carry on business; nor will they appoint to the courts of justice senior counsellors of wisdom and knowledge of law. On the contrary, they will honor the youngest and the foolish, and appoint them to preside over the courts. And the latter, ignorant both of the art of state and of practical knowledge, will not be able to bear the weight of their honors or to govern, but because of their incompetence they will release the yoke of office. At that point the elder and wise gentlemen, though righteous in a position to face all difficulties, will keep in mind how they have been neglected and refuse to help, saying: 'It is none of our business; We are strangers; Let the boys in the inner circle take care of it.' Therefore they will stand at a distance, and ruin will assail those kings on every side. It will be equal to when the yoke was imposed on the young steers, who were not strong enough for the weight, and not on the team of strong and strong draft

oxen, which alone were able to do the work. However, you have nothing to fear about this. Tell me your fifth dream."

'It came to me, sir, that I saw a horse with one mouth on both sides, which was being given fodder on both sides, and ate with both mouths. This was my fifth dream. What will become of it?"

"This dream also will come true only in the future, in the days of unjust and foolish kings, who will appoint unjust and greedy men as judges. These fools, despising the good, will take bribes from both sides as they sit in the court of judgment, and will be filled with this double corruption, like the horse that ate food with two mouths at the same time. However, you have nothing to fear about this. Tell me your sixth dream."

'It has come to me, sir, to see people holding out a well-kept gold bowl worth a hundred thousand pieces, and begging an old jackal to let you stay in it. And I saw the beast do it. This was my sixth dream. What will become of it?"

"This dream will also come true only in the future. For in the days to come, unjust kings, though of a race of kings, distrustful of the heirs of their old nobility, will not honor them, but will exalt in their place those of low birth; so that the nobles will be lowered and those born of the law elevated to lords. Then the great families will be driven by need to try to live depending on the arrivals, and they will offer them their daughters in marriage. And the union of noble maidens with those of low origin will be like the old jackal's stable in the golden bowl. However, you have nothing to fear about this. Tell me your seventh dream."

"A man was weaving a rope, sir, and as he was plaiting it, he threw it at his feet. Under his bench lay a hungry female jackal, who continued to eat the rope while he braided, but without the man noticing. This is what I saw. This was my seventh dream. What will become of it?"

"Even this dream will not come true until the future. Because in the days to come, women will emulate men, her heavy drinking, elegant clothes, walking abroad and the joys of this world. In their wickedness and wastefulness, these women drink strong drinks with their lovers; they will flaunt garlands, perfumes and ointments; and unaware of even the most urgent domestic duties, they will continue to watch over their lovers, even in the cracks high up in the outer wall; Yes, they will torment the very seminal wheat that tomorrow will have to be sown to give a good mood; In all these ways they will plunder the warehouse conquered by the hard work of their husbands in the fields and in the meadow, devouring the poor men's stuff while the hungry jackal under the bench ate the rope of the tailpiece while weaving it. However, you have nothing to fear about this. Tell me your eighth dream."

'It occurred to me, sir, that I saw at a palace gate a large pitcher filled to the brim, and in the midst of several empty ones. And from the four cardinal points, and also from the four intermediate points, a constant stream of people of all four castes continued to arrive, bringing water and pouring it into the full jug. And the water overflowed and ran away. But anyway they continued to pour more and more water into the overflowing container, without either of the two opponents noticing even a glance at the empty jugs. This was my eighth dream. What will become of it?"

"Even this dream will not come true until the future. For in the days to come the world will decay; The kingdom will weaken, its kings will become poor and mean; The most important among them will have no more than 100,000 coins in its treasury. Then these kings, in their need, will put all the country people to work for them; for the sake of kings, the working people, leaving their work, will sow grain and dust, keep watch, harvest, stag and gather; for the sake of kings they will plant sugar cane, build and move sugar mills and boil molasses; For the sake of kings, flower gardens and orchards will grow, and they will reap the fruits. And while they collect all sorts of various produce, they will fill the actual collections to full, without even taking a look at their own empty barns at home. So it will be like filling the full jug, without caring about the completely empty ones. However, you have nothing to fear about this. Tell me your ninth dream."

"It has come to me, sir, to see a deep pool with shelving banks all around and invaded by the vegetation of the five types of lotus. Two- and four-legged creatures poured in from all sides to drink of its waters. The depths in the center were muddy, but the water was clear and sparkling at the edge where the various creatures descended into the pool. This was my ninth dream. What will become of it?"

"Even this dream will not come true until the future. For in the days to come kings will become unrighteous; They will rule according to their own will, and they will not execute judgment according to righteousness. These kings will covet riches and fatten up on bribes; They will not show mercy, love, and compassion toward their people, but they will be vicious and cruel, amassing wealth, crushing their subjects like sugar canes in a mill, and taxing them to the last penny. Unable to pay the oppressive tax, the people will flee from villages and towns and the like, and find refuge on the borders of the kingdom; The heart of the earth will be a wild land, while the borders will be teeming with people, even though the water was muddy in the center of the pool and clear at the edge. However, you have nothing to fear about this. Tell me your tenth dream."

"I got the impression, sir, that I had seen rice boiling in a pot without ending. By not being finished I mean that it seemed that it had been clearly marked and kept separate, so that the cooking proceeded in three distinct phases. One part was soup, one part hard and raw, and one part simply cooked in an elegant way. This was my tenth dream. What will become of it?"

"Even this dream will not come true until the future. For in the days to come kings will become unrighteous; The people surrounding the kings will also become unjust, as well as Brahmins and householders, citizens and peasants; Yes, all people alike will become unrighteous, except sages and brahmins. Then, their ministering deities —the sacrificial spirits, the tree spirits, and the air spirits— will also become unrighteous. The very winds that blow over the kingdoms of these unrighteous kings will become cruel and lawless; They will shake the mansions of heaven and thus kindle the wrath of the spirits that dwell therein, that they may not allow it to rain—or, if it rains, it will not fall upon the whole kingdom at once, nor will the gentle rain fall upon all the lands cultivated or sown to help them in their need. And, as in the kingdom in general, so in every varied district and village, and upon every separate well or lake, rain shall not fall upon all its expanse at the same time; if it rains on the top, it won't rain on the bottom; Here the crops will be ruined by a heavy downpour, there they will wither from a very intense drought, and here they will again thrive in rhythm with gentle showers to water them. So crops sown within the boundaries of a single kingdom—such as rice in a single pot—will not have a uniform character. However, you have nothing to fear about this. Tell me your eleventh dream."

"I thought, sir, that I saw sour buttermilk bartered for precious sandalwood, worth 100,000 coins. This was my eleventh dream. What will become of it?"

"Even this dream will not come true until the future—in the days when my doctrine is faltering. For in the days to come many greedy and shameless Brethren will arise, who will preach the same words for their bellies with which I have railed against greed! Because they have defected because of their belly and have taken a stand on the side of the sectarians, they will not be able to take their preaching to Nirvana. On the contrary, their only thought, as they preach, will be with beautiful words and sweet voices to induce men to give them expensive clothes and the like, and to be ready to give such gifts. Others, still sitting in the streets, on street corners, at the gates of kings' palaces, and so on, stoop down to preach to ask for money, yes, for simple kahāpanas, half-kahāpanas, pādas or māsakas coined! And since they thus barter for food or clothing or for kahāpanas and half kahāpanas my doctrine whose value is Nirvana, they will be equal to those who bartered for buttermilk on the ground, precious sandalwood worth 100,000 pieces. However, you have nothing to fear about this. Tell me your twelfth dream."

"It seemed to me, sir, that I saw empty pumpkins sinking into the water. What will become of it?"

"Even this dream will not come true until the future, in the days of unrighteous kings, when the world will be perverted. For in those days kings will not show favor to the heirs of the nobility, but only to those of low birth; and the latter will become great lords, while the nobles will sink into poverty. In the same way, in the royal presence, in the gates of the palace, in the council chamber and in the courts of justice, the words of the suns of humble origin (which the empty pumpkins represent) will be established, as if they had sunk until they had settled on the bottom. So also in the assemblies of the Confraternity, in the major and minor conclaves, and in the investigations concerning couples, clothing, lodgings, and the like, only the counsel of the wicked and cowardly will be considered to have saving power, not that of the modest Brethren. So everywhere it will be like when the empty pumpkins sank. However, you have nothing to fear about this. Tell me your thirteenth dream."

At that point the king said, 'It has come to me, sir, that I have seen huge blocks of solid rock, as big as houses, floating like ships on the waters. What will become of it?"

"Even this dream will not come true before times like those I have spoken of. For in those days unjust kings will show honor to the low-born, who will become great lords, while the nobles will sink into poverty. Not to the nobles, but only to the new arrivalists that respect will be paid. In the royal presence, in the council chamber or in the courts of justice, the words of the nobles educated in the law (and it is they whom the solid rocks symbolize) will flow inactively and will not sink into the hearts of men. When they speak, the careerists just laugh at them to despise them, saying, 'What are these guys saying?' So also in the assemblies of the Brethren, as said before, men will not consider worthy of respect the excellent among the Brethren; The words of such will not sink deep, but will flow vaguely, as when rocks floated on the waters. However, you have nothing to fear about this. Tell me your fourteenth dream."

"It struck me, sir, that I saw little frogs, no bigger than tiny flowers, chasing huge black snakes rapidly, cutting them into pieces like so many lotus stalks, and devouring them. What will come of this?"

"Even this dream will not come true until those days to come, like the ones I have spoken of, when the world is decaying. For then men's passions will be so strong, and their lusts so ardent, that they will be for the time being slaves of the youngest of their wives, to whom the only disposition will be hired slaves and servants, oxen, buffaloes, and all the cattle, gold and silver, and all that is in the house. If the poor husband asks where the money is (for example) or a robe, he will be immediately told that it is where it is, that he should take care of his business and not be so curious about what is or is not in his house. And so, in various ways, wives, by insults and provocations, will establish their dominion over their husbands, as well as over slaves and servants of servants. So it will be like when tiny frogs, no bigger than tiny flowers, devoured the big black snakes. However, you have nothing to fear about this. Tell me your fifteenth dream."

"It occurred to me, sir, to have seen a village raven, in which all the Ten Vices lived, escorted by an escort of those birds which, on account of their golden sheen, are called golden royals. What will become of it?"

"Even this dream will not come true until the future, until the reign of weak kings. In the days to come, kings will arise who know nothing about elephants or other arts, and will be cowards in the field. Fearing that they will be deposed and driven out of their royal estate, they will raise to power not their peers but their footmen, bathers, barbers, and the like. Thus, excluded from the royal favor and unable to support themselves, the nobles will be reduced to dancing with the young careerists, as when the raven had golden mallards as a royal escort. However, you have nothing to fear about this. Tell me your sixteenth dream."

"Up to that time, sir, it was always the panthers who preyed on the goats; But I thought I saw goats chasing panthers and devouring them—eat, nibble, male—while, at the sight of the distant goats, terrified wolves fled trembling with fear and hid in their fortresses in the bush. This was my dream. What will become of it?"

"Even this dream will not come true until the future, until the reign of unrighteous kings. In those days the humble born will be elevated to lordship and become royal favorites, while the nobles will sink into oblivion and suffering. Gaining influence in the courts thanks to their favor with the king, these careerists will forcefully claim the ancestral possessions, clothes and all the properties of the old nobility. And--when the latter invoke their rights before the courts, then the king's henchmen will have them slammed, clubbed, grabbed by the throat and chased away with words of contempt, like, 'Know your place, you fools! What? Do you argue with us? The king will know of your insolence, and we will have you cut off your hands and feet and apply other corrections!' From that moment on, the terrified nobles will confirm that their possessions really belong to the presumptuous careerists and will tell the favorites to accept them. And they will hide them at home and there they will curl up in agony of fear. In the same way, the evil Brothers will persecute the good and worthy Brothers at will, until they, finding no one to help them, flee into the jungle. And this oppression of the noble and good Brothers by the humble and wicked brothers will be like frightening wolves by goats. However, you have nothing to fear about this. This dream also refers only to future times. It was not the truth, it was not love for you, that drove the Brahmins to prophesy as they did. No, it was the greed for gain, and the intuition that comes from greed, that shaped all their selfish words."

Thus the Master set forth the meaning of these sixteen great dreams, adding,-- "You, sire, are not the first to have these dreams; They were also dreamed of by kings of times past; and, then as now, the Brahmins found in them a pretext for sacrifices; on this reason, at the request of the wise and the good, the Bodhisatta was consulted, and the dreams of old were set forth by them just as they have now been explained." And having said that, at the king's request, he told this story of the past.

Once, when Brahmadatta reigned in Benares, the Bodhisatta was born a Brahmin in the north of the country. When he reached years of discretion he renounced the world for the life of a hermit; he attained the higher Knowledge and Results, and lived in the land of the Himalayas in the bliss that comes from Intuition.

In those years, in the same way, Brahmadatta dreamed these dreams to Benarés and asked the Brahmins about them. And the Brahmins, then as now, set to work in sacrifices. Among them was a young Brahmin of learning and wisdom, a pupil of the king's chaplain, who addressed his master as follows: --"Master, you taught me the Three Vedas. Isn't there a text that says 'The killing of one creature does not give life to another'?" "My son, this means money to us, a lot of money. You only seem anxious to spare the king's treasure!" 'Do as you please, master,' said the young Brahmin; "As for me, for what purpose should I stay here with you any longer?" And having said that, she left him and devoted herself to real pleasure.

That same day the Bodhisatta, knowing all this, thought to himself, "If I visit the places infested with men today, I will work to free a great multitude from their bondage." So, crossing the air, he rested in real pleasure and sat radiant as a golden statue, on the Ceremonial Stone. The young Brahmin approached and, with due obligation, sat down beside the Bodhisatta with all cordiality. Sweet conversations passed; and the Bodhisatta asked if the young Brahmin thought that the king ruled justly. 'Sir,' replied the young man, 'the king is just himself; But the Brahmins make him side with evil. Consulted by the king about the sixteen dreams he had dreamed, the Brahmins seized the opportunity for sacrifices and set to work. Oh, sir, would it not be a good thing to offer the king to acquaint the king with the true meaning of his dreams, and thus deliver a great number of creatures from their angora?" 'But, my son, I do not know the king, nor he me. However, if he comes here and asks me, I will tell him." 'I will bring the king, sir,' said the young Brahmin; 'If only he would wait here a minute till I come back.' And having obtained the consent of the Bodhisatta, he presented himself before the king and said that a traveling ascetic had rested in royal pleasure, who said that he would expose the king's dreams; Would he not have connected them with this ascetic?

When the king heard of this, he immediately took refuge in pleasure with a large retinue of friends escort. Greeting the ascetic, he sat down next to the holy man and asked if it was true that he knew what would

happen to his dreams. "Certainly, sire," said the Bodhisatta; "But first let me feel the dreams as you dreamed them." 'Promptly, sir,' replied the king; and it began like this:

First the bulls, and the trees, and the cows, and the calves,

Horse, plate, rinse, water pot,

A pond, raw rice and sandalwood,

And pumpkins that sank, and stones that swam,

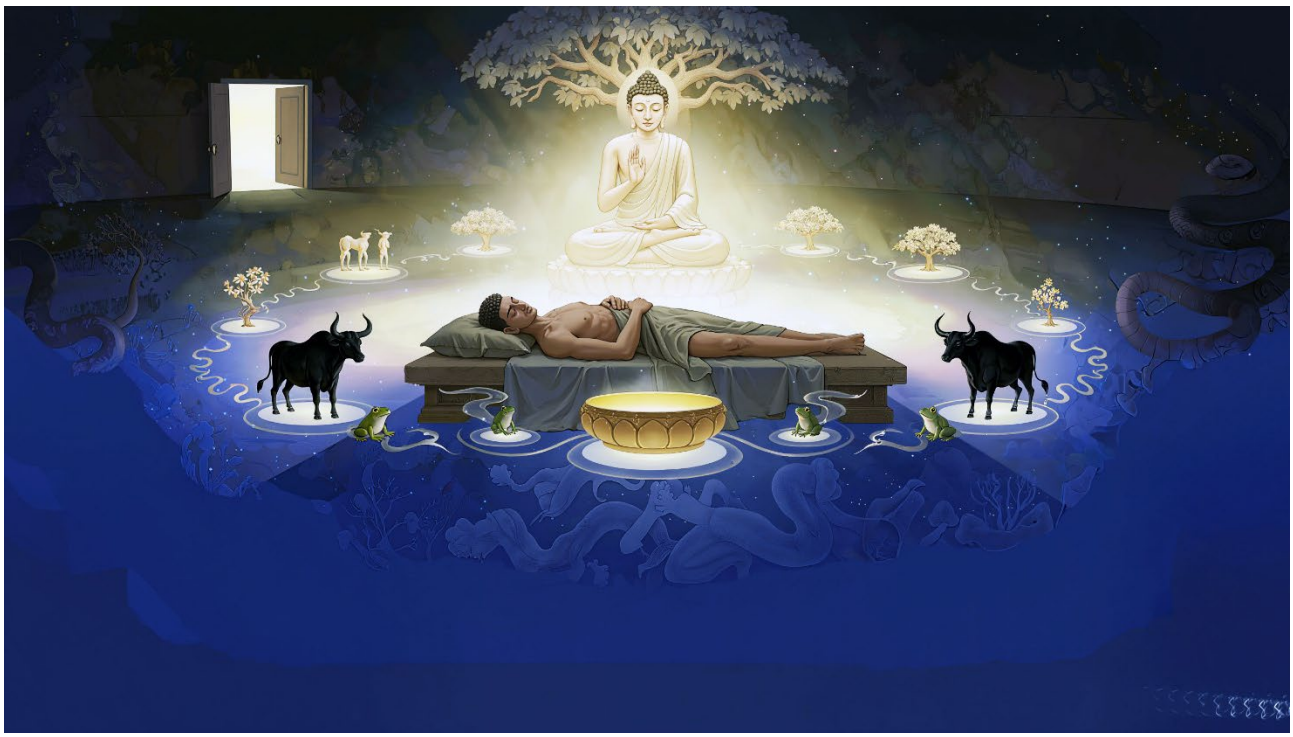
and so on, ending with

And wolves in panic-fear of goats.

And his majesty continued to tell his dreams in the same way that King Pasenadi had described them.

"Enough," said the Great Being; "You have nothing to fear or fear in all of this." Having thus reassured the king and freed a great multitude from slavery, the Bodhisatta resumed his position in mid-air, from where he exhorted the king to establish him in the Five Commandments, concluding with these words: "Henceforth, O king, do not join the Brahmins in slaughtering animals for sacrifice." His teaching ended, the Bodhisatta passed straight into the air towards his abode. And the king, remaining faithful to the teaching he had heard, died after a life of alms and other works of good work to be lived according to his favors.

When the lesson was over, the Master said, "You have nothing to fear from these dreams; Away with the sacrifice!" Having had the sacrifice removed and having saved the lives of a multitude of creatures, he showed the link and identified the Birth by saying: "Ānanda was the king of those days, Sāriputta the young brahmin and I the ascetic."



Synopsis of the plot

King Pasenadi of Kosala wakes up terrified after having sixteen enigmatic dreams. His court Brahmins interpret them as omens of misfortune (loss of kingdom, life, or wealth) and prescribe costly and bloody animal sacrifices to ward off danger. Queen Mallikā, seeing the agitation of the Brahmins, advises the king to consult the Buddha, "the Supreme Brahmin of this world and of the world of the devas". The king goes to the Master, who listens to the dreams and interprets them one by one. In contrast to the Brahmins, the Buddha reveals that dreams are not about the king's personal destiny, but are prophetic visions of the moral and social decline that will occur in the distant future, when greed, injustice, and corruption will prevail. The king is saved and the sacrifice is canceled, saving many lives. The Buddha concludes by telling an identical story from the past, in which he was a Bodhisatta ascetic who saved King Brahmadatta from the same trap.

Dramatic Structure

- Characters:

  - King Pasenadi of Kosala (and King Brahmadatta in past history): The individual troubled by powerful unconscious forces (dreams). It represents humanity seeking orientation in the face of the unknown and fear.

  - Court Brahmins: The shadow of institutionalized knowledge. They interpret the symbol literally, with greed and lust for power, proposing a bloody solution that projects fear onto an external scapegoat.

  - Regina Mallikā: The mediating figure, the intuition that directs towards true wisdom. It recognizes the inadequacy of the conventional response.

  - The Buddha/Bodhisatta: The Archetypal Self or Sage. The one who knows how to decipher the symbolic language of the collective unconscious without fear, bringing the interpretation back from the personal to the transpersonal and universal level.

- Conflict: The erroneous and literal interpretation of the symbols of the unconscious (dreams) generates a paralysis of terror and a destructive solution (sacrifice). The conflict is between knowledge based on fear and greed, and wisdom based on deep and compassionate vision.

- Turning point: The intervention of Queen Mallikā and the subsequent consultation of the Buddha overturn the dynamic. The interpretative turning point is radical: dreams are not an attack on the individual, but an impersonal and universal reflection of a law of cause and effect on a vast temporal scale.

- Outcome: The annulment of sacrifice and liberation from fear. Understanding the transpersonal nature of the dream dissolves the king's personal anguish. True catharsis is not external (sacrifice), but internal (understanding).

Explicit teaching

The story openly declares that dreams are not messages of individual misfortune sent by hostile forces, but can be symbolic visions of collective destinies linked to the decay of the Dhamma (the universal law). Greed and ignorance interpret symbols in a distorted way to take advantage of them. True interpretation, accessible only to an Awakened One, dissolves fear and restores order, leading to the cessation of suffering (of the sacrificed animals and the anguished king). It teaches to be wary of those who use fear to manipulate and to seek the guidance of a clear and compassionate mind.

Implicit teaching

1. The dream as a mirror of the transpersonal psyche: The implicit message is that the "big dreams" do not speak (only) of the individual dreamer, but of the Anima Mundi, of the state of the collective psyche. The king, in his symbolic function as the unifying center of the kingdom, dreams of the social body. His anguish is the symptom of a disharmony that goes beyond his person.

2. Interpretation as an ethical act: Deciphering a symbol is not a neutral act. The Brahmin interpretation is a manipulation that leads to death; that of the Buddha is a revelation that leads to life. What is at stake in the hermeneutic of the deep is compassion.

3. Sacrifice as a projection: The proposed sacrificial rite is a perfect illustration of the scapegoat dynamic: an attempt is made to expel the internal "evil" by projecting it onto an external victim. The Buddha debunks this mechanism, pointing out that the root of evil is greed and injustice, and that the solution is awareness, not ritual killing.

Relationship with the Sage and Level III

This Jātaka is the perfect hinge for Level III – Beyond the Veil: Dream, Heart and Apophatic Path, and resonates deeply with the sage Beyond the Name, the Dream and the Door.

- Beyond the Name: Brahmins label dreams as "bad omens" and tie them to the nominal fate of the king. The Buddha ignores this etiquette and looks at the impersonal process that symbols reveal. The truth lies not in the "name" (the misfortune for the king), but in the dynamic and universal vision of the Dhamma.

- Beyond the dream: The dream itself is a veil, an appearance of forms that must be torn apart. The interpretation does not stop at the dreamlike dramatization (the bull, the horse) but uses it as a finger that points to the moon of moral decay. The dream is not an entity to be worshipped or feared, but a phenomenon to be understood in order to go beyond.

- Asceticism of the heart: Asceticism here is not an external rite, but the inner discipline of the king who, overcoming fear and respect for the constituted authority, entrusts himself to a deeper guide. It is the asceticism of those who stop projecting and begin to listen with an open heart to a greater truth.

- Apophatic path: The Buddha does not provide a metaphysical causal explanation of the dream (who sends it? how does it materially happen?). He explains what the symbols mean in terms of future cause-and-effect relationships, but the mystery of how a dream can tear through time remains intact. The door to the collective unconscious and the future opens, but its ultimate essence is not conceptualized, only indicated.

Compelling anecdotes: Jung, everyday life and the apophatic dimension

Anecdote 1: The collective's dream

Imagine a well-intentioned company manager dreaming for sixteen nights straight of visions of machines running empty, employees turned into automatons and balance sheets becoming unbalanced. A fashionable "consultant" might interpret this as his fear of failure and propose drastic cuts and layoffs ("the sacrifice"). But the manager, remembering this Jātaka, seeks an inner "sage". He understands that his dream is not a symptom of his career at risk, but an intuitive perception of the sick "corporate body". Dreams signal a decline

in the "corporate Dhamma": loss of meaning, interrupted communication, exploitation of human resources. Instead of sacrificing employees, he decides to sacrifice the old predatory business models, saving the "life" of the working community. Jung would say that he stopped taking the dream "on the level of the subject" (as concerning only his personal shadow) and recognized it as an archetypal "great dream", a manifestation of the collective unconscious of his group.

The image manages to translate the symbolic structure of the anecdote into visual form, favoring a strongly Jungian language rather than simply narrative. He does not illustrate the text literally: instead he builds a real "psychic map" of the dream.

The whole composition is organized as a great symbolic opposition.

In the center, seen from behind, sits the manager in front of his desk. The hand resting on the face communicates reflection, not panic. He is not yet a man who acts: he is a man who listens.

A gigantic rift between two worlds opens up in front of him.

The left side

It is dominated by cool colors:

Steel Blue

Grey

Black

dark reds.

We find:

huge gears that rotate without producing anything;

employees with empty eyes transformed into automatons;

a long line of motionless, almost asleep people;

plummeting financial charts;

sheets flying;

A dark city.

Everything communicates entropy. It is not the economic failure itself. It is the loss of the soul of the organization. The machines continue to work. Human beings do not.

The center

Here appears the most important figure. A bearded, luminous old man emerges from the light. He is not represented as a guru. It almost seems like an archetype. It can be interpreted simultaneously as:

the Bodhisatta of the Jātaka;

the Jungian Old Sage;

the Self;

impersonal wisdom.

Behind him appears a concentric circular structure.

Keep in mind:

a mandala;

a target;

the psychic center.

It is probably the most Jungian symbol of the entire composition.

The right side

Here everything changes. The colors become:

gold;

green;

warm white.

The company is not shown as "richer". It is shown as more alive.

Let's see:

people who dialogue;

groups that plan together;

collaborative activities;

care for the environment;

trees;

natural light.

A large tree grows in the center of the scene. The tree symbolically replaces the factory. It's a huge change. Organization is no longer a machine. It becomes an organism.

Symbolic analysis

The image uses at least five Jungian archetypes.

1. The Big Dream

In the text, the dream is not about the manager. It concerns the entire community. The picture makes this very good. In fact, the dream occupies almost the entire sky. The protagonist is tiny. This immediately suggests:

The dream is bigger than the dreamer.

It is a typical feature of the "big dreams" described by Jung.

2. The Old Sage

The central luminous figure fulfills the function of the archetype of the Old Sage. It offers no solutions. It offers orientation. It is interesting that his face is turned towards the bright part. He does not look at the past. Look at the possible future.

3. The Mandala

Behind the Essay appears a concentric circle. In analytical psychology, the mandala represents:

the center;

the Self;

hidden order.

It is as if he were saying:

The real problem is not profit.

It is the loss of the center.

4. The Tree

The tree is perhaps the most successful Buddhist symbol in the composition. It can simultaneously represent:

the Bodhi tree;

the tree of life;

healthy organization;

the Dhamma.

It is the opposite of gears. The tree grows. Gears wear out.

5. The Passage

The central light creates a path. There is no bridge. There is a transformation. It is a profoundly apophatic image. It doesn't show "how" to change. It only shows that change is possible.

Relationship with the Mahāsupina-jātaka

The original text tells of sixteen disturbing dreams that seem to announce a catastrophe. The false sages propose sacrifices. The Bodhisatta shows instead that dreams speak of an ethical deterioration of the world. The image retains this structure.

In fact, the manager:

it does not sacrifice workers;

sacrifices the paradigm.

This is a very clever translation of Jātaka into business language.

Jungian reading

Jung would distinguish two levels.

Subjective level

The dream could mean:

"I'm afraid of failing."

This is the consultant's interpretation.

Objective plan

The dream describes something that exists independently of the ego.

The company is losing its soul.

It is what Jung would call a dream from the collective unconscious.

The image makes this reading convincing.

Apophatic dimension

The most successful aspect is perhaps the least evident.

The image does not show the "new business model". He doesn't explain. It does not illustrate procedures. It does not feature success charts. Instead, it shows a quality of being. This is typically apophatic. The truth is not defined. It is hinted at. The healed organization is represented by relationships, light, trees and mutual presence, not by performance indicators.

Improved Appearances

To adhere even more deeply to the text of the Mahāsupina-jātaka, some elements are further developed:

Call for the number sixteen: sixteen dream fragments or sixteen symbolic windows appear in the sky, in homage to the king's sixteen visions.

Visualization of the "corporate body": thin filaments of light connect all employees to the manager, so as to suggest that the dream belongs to the entire community and not to the individual.

Made more evident than the false counselor: an elegant figure but immersed in the shadows that indicates an altar of sacrifice made of folders, letters of dismissal or torn contracts, in contrast to the Old Sage.

Replacing part of the iconography of the financial crisis: graphics and the dark city with images of the loss of the corporate Dhamma: broken bridges between offices, broken threads of communication, withered trees in workspaces, faces that do not look at each other.

Accentuate the archetypal character of the dream: the machines, automatons and gears emerge as visions suspended in the sky, rather than as simple realistic scenes, so as to evoke more the "Great Dream" described by Jung.

Overall, the images: they do not limit themselves to representing a manager in crisis, but depict the transition from a consciousness centered on control to a conscience capable of listening to the symbol. In this sense, it visually renders the message shared by the Mahāsupina-jātaka and analytical psychology: the authentic dream does not invite us to find a culprit to sacrifice, but to recognize the loss of the vital principle that holds the community together and to radically transform the way we inhabit the world.

Story

1 The dream of the collective

Marco Ferretti, forty-seven years old, general manager of Ventis Manifatture, stopped counting sheep on the twelfth night. Instead, the gears counted.

Every night the same film, in sixteen paintings that followed one another like the windows of a museum of nightmares: machines that went around in circles without producing anything, employees with metal faces that repeated identical gestures, a bridge of chains that collapsed under the weight of boxes of documents, a scale that leaned more and more to the left. Every morning he woke up with the same question stuck in his throat.

He called Herrera, the consultant that everyone in town was fighting over. Herrera listened, nodded with the seriousness of someone who already has the diagnosis ready before the story, and said: "It's simple, Marco. You're afraid of failing. Your unconscious is telling you to cut off the dead branches before the tree all falls down. Fifteen percent of the staff, right away, and the markets will love you."

Marco almost signed the letter. The pen was already an inch from the paper when he remembered a text he had read years earlier at university, during a forgotten course in the history of religions: the Mahāsupina-jātaka, the sixteen dreams of King Pasenadi. The king had also dreamed of disasters, and the court Brahmins had also advised him to make bloody sacrifices to ward off evil. But the Buddha had explained that those dreams were not about the king's personal destiny: they were visions of the future moral decay of an entire age. There was no need to kill anyone. It was necessary to understand.

He put down his pen.

That night he did not sleep. He sat at his desk, among the city lights that filtered through the shutters, and instead of looking for an external consultant he looked inside himself for what the old people called an inner sage: not a mystical voice, but the part of himself that had founded the company thirty years earlier with his father, when shifts were decided by shaking hands and not with Excel sheets.

He understood then that dreams were not the symptom of his career in danger. They were the body of the company that spoke through him, the only one who, sleeping, still listened.

The next morning he called a meeting, not to announce the cuts, but to listen. He asked a simple question to his sixteen department managers, gathered around the oval table: "Have any of you had strange dreams lately?"

The silence lasted three seconds. Then Elena, from human resources, said softly: "Gears that turn without producing anything."

Paolo, of logistics, blanched: "A bridge of chains."

One after the other, all sixteen — exactly sixteen, like the nights, like the paintings in the dream — told an identical fragment of the same nightmare, each his own piece of a single great mosaic that no one had ever shared because no one had dared.

Marco understood, at that moment, what Jung meant by talking about "big dreams": it was not his personal shadow that spoke, but the collective unconscious of an entire human group that shared the same destiny, the same factory, the same tree to be saved or cut down.

He didn't fire anyone. Instead, he sacrificed the project of demolishing the old inner courtyard — the one with the large oak tree planted by his father — to build a parking lot. He renewed the processes, not the people. A year later, the company not only survived: it literally flourished around that tree that sixteen managers had dreamed of, without knowing it, on the exact same night.

Anecdote 2: The futility of sacrifice

A person is obsessed with a recurring dream in which an "already full vase keeps getting filled" (the king's eighth dream). A superficial interpretation would lead her to "sacrifice" her free time to be even more productive and fill the vase further. Guided by the apophatic dimension of this Jātaka, however, it stops. He understands that the dream does not ask for a solution, but holds a mystery: the insatiable nature of desire. There is no "vase" to fill out there; The fullness he seeks is not the result of an addition, but of the discovery of a completeness that is already present, empty of objects. Interpretation does not become a new concept to be possessed, but an inner silence that dissolves the compulsion to fill. It is the moment in which "something is silent and resonates simultaneously in the interiority", a knowledge without concept that says: stop pouring, you are already the vessel.

The two images, considered as a single symbolic composition, build a real initiatory itinerary that interprets the Mahāsupina-jātaka not on the moral or psychological level, but on the ontological and apophatic one. The second image expands and makes explicit what the first suggested inwardly, transforming the dream of the king's eighth omen ("an already full vessel keeps being filled") into a meditation on the nature of desire and identity.

The work opens with a large seated figure in meditation. He is not sleeping, but seems to inhabit that threshold where dream and wakefulness cease to be opposites. The face is relaxed, the eyes closed; there is no interpretative tension but listening.

In front of her appears the large vase. It is huge, ancient, almost archetypal. From every direction, dozens of jugs continue to pour water. The water is overflowing. It flows. It disperses. Yet the jugs never stop pouring.

In the second scene this intuition becomes even more narrative.

The protagonist appears divided into two modes of being. On the left she is immersed in the world of productivity: computer, documents, clock, notes, city in the background. With evident effort, he personally continues to add water to the already full pot. Above her appears the dream of the king of the Mahāsupina-jātaka: the sovereign sleeps while the vessel incessantly receives new water from vessels suspended in the sky. On the right side, however, the same person no longer performs any action. He simply sits. In front of the sun. Near the still water. The vase continues to exist, but she no longer feeds it. The center of the composition is therefore not the vase. It is the interrupted gesture.

Symbolic analysis

The vase

In Jungian language, the vase represents the psychic container, the Self as a place of transformation. Normally the vase welcomes. Here, however, it is already completely full. To keep filling it is to believe that completeness depends on adding something.

Successes.

Performance.

Experiences.

Knowledge.

Spirituality.

Even interpretations.

The dream denounces precisely this illusion. There is no lack of water. The ability to see that the vase is already full is missing.

Water

Water has a dual function. On the one hand, it represents life, knowledge, psychic energy. On the other hand, it becomes a symbol of compulsive repetition. Each new jug finally promises completeness. Every new jug comes too late. The water is not welcomed. It overflows. Its abundance turns into dispersion. Desire produces waste.

The many figures who pour

In the first image, the figures are almost ghostly. They seem to be aspects of the same psyche.

Person.

Shadow.

Roles.

Expectations.

Internalized norms.

They are all engaged in the same automatic gesture. No one notices that the vase is already full.

This multiplicity is reminiscent of what Jung would call the autonomous complex: parts of the psyche that act independently of consciousness.

The meditating protagonist

The seated figure represents the appearance of the transcendent function.

He does not intervene.

It does not correct.

He does not interpret.

He observes.

And it is precisely this suspension of action that interrupts the compulsive chain.

The left-right split

The second image introduces a strong contrast. On the left, Cronus dominates.

Time.

Deadlines.

Work.

Productivity.

Accumulation.

On the right appears Kairos.

Presence.

Silence.

Light.

Space.

The water in the lake no longer needs to be refilled. It already exists.

The entire composition suggests that transformation does not consist in changing the external world, but in changing the relationship with desire.

The King's Dream

The small scene suspended in the sky is fundamental. It is not a simple narrative memory. It is the archetype. As often happens in Jungian dreams, the symbol does not belong to the protagonist but to the collective unconscious. The king dreams for everyone. The contemporary protagonist unconsciously relives that same dream.

Jungian reading

From the Jungian point of view, the vessel coincides with the Self. The ego believes that the Self must be constructed. The Self, on the other hand, precedes the Ego. Neurosis arises when the ego tries to produce what is already present. This is why the dream does not ask for more work. He asks for a renunciation. Not a moral renunciation. An ontological renunciation. Stop producing yourself.

Apophatic reading

Here the deepest core of the image emerges. Interpretation does not add a new meaning. He subtracts it. The apophatic way does not say:

"The vase means..."

Rather, he says:

"Drop the need to give it meaning."

The dream holds a mystery. Not an enigma. The enigma wants a solution. The mystery wants a transformation. When the protagonist stops pouring, she has not found an answer. He stopped asking the wrong question.

Connection with the Mahāsupina-jātaka

In the Jātaka the eighth dream denounces the insatiability of the passions and the inversion of the natural order. The reading proposed by the images expands their meaning: the vase becomes the metaphor of contemporary consciousness, continuously urged to accumulate experiences, skills, results and even spiritual paths. Excess does not arise from scarcity, but from the inability to recognize the original fullness.

So the dream does not invite us to find a new way to fill the vase, but to interrupt the very gesture of filling.

Overall artistic rating

The unification of the two images produces a very effective symbolic narrative. The first offers a contemplative and archetypal dimension, almost out of time; the second translates that symbolism into the daily experience of contemporary man, making visible the passage from productive compulsion to inner silence. Together, they form a single initiatory tale: from dream to awareness, from accumulation to stillness, from the illusion of lack to the discovery of a completeness that does not come from adding, but from recognizing what has always been present.

In this perspective, the concluding message could be expressed as follows:

The vase is not waiting to be filled. It is the "I" that, forgetting its origin, continues to pour into what is already full. The awakening takes place when the hand stops: then the silence reveals that the vessel sought was not an object to be filled, but the being itself, already whole, open and empty of all possessions.

Story

2 The vase that does not overflow

Elena pours water into an already full vase. He has been doing it for months, without knowing it: every deadline met is another jug emptied into a container that has no more space. The clock on the wall of his study is submerged in yellow post-its, the desk an archipelago of papers, the laptop lit up like a small artificial moon. In the dream that has haunted her for weeks, the vase is huge, made of ancient bronze, and the more she fills it, the more the water overflows at her feet without the level inside ever changing.

He has read that it is the eighth dream of a king—one of sixteen that an ancient ruler brought to a sage to decipher. "A full vase is still filled, while an empty one remains ignored." The simplest reading whispers to her: work harder, produce more, fill that jar again — you'll finally be enough. For a whole night he convinces himself that the solution is to sacrifice Sundays, evenings, the time he calls, with a certain shame, "free".

Then he stops. Not out of tiredness — because of something else, a stillness that he hadn't asked for and that comes anyway, like the tide. She understands that the dream is not indicating a task to her. He is showing her a mystery: desire is not satiated by adding, because it is not a gap to be filled but a movement that regenerates itself, ad infinitum, whatever is poured into it. There is no real vase to fill outside of her. The fullness he pursues will not come by accumulation. Perhaps, she thinks, and the word seems too big for the room in which she is sitting, she is already there, empty of objects, and therefore capable of containing everything.

That night he still dreams, but differently. She is sitting on a stone terrace, in front of a sea that has no name, the sun low and golden as in the mornings that she never remembers well when she wakes up. In front of her, a woman identical to herself pours water into a golden bowl placed on the ground. The water falls, ripples the surface, and inside the ripple appears — tiny, suspended — the silhouette of a person sitting in meditation. Elena understands, with the conceptless certainty that only true dreams have, that that silhouette is her. Not those who pay. Who is paid.

He stops wondering what it means. Meaning, for once, is of no use to her.

In the morning he wakes up with a phrase in his head, not his: stop pouring, you are already the vase.

He goes to work. Cancel two meetings. No one collapses. The sky does not fall.

That evening, rearranging old family papers that had never been opened, he found among the pages of a book inherited from his grandfather a yellowed sheet, never sent, with the same handwriting as him — but dated thirty years before his birth. It is transcribed, word for word, the same dream of the eighth vase, and underneath, in a handwriting that is not hers and yet looks disturbingly like her, a single line: you too will dream of it, and you will understand that the vase was never yours. It belongs to anyone who stops pouring.

Elena stares at the paper for a long time. She doesn't know if the dream came to her from inside or outside, if she is continuing something already started or starting it for the first time. But for the first time, she doesn't care to know. The silence he hears does not ask to be explained. He only asks, politely, to be heard.

Carousel Table: 77. Mahāsupina-jātaka with Jungian and apophatic integration

Slide	Title	Scene / visual description	Narrative anecdote (Jātaka 77)	Jungian Reference / Psychological Anecdote	Apophatic dimension
1	**The King's Terror: The Eruption of the Numinous**	A king lies curled up in his sumptuous bed, his eyes wide open in the dark, his body rigid with fear. Around him, an aura of menacing darkness.	King Pasenadi dreams of 16 enigmatic visions and wakes up in a death terror, paralyzed.	**The unconscious breaks in.** Jung: "big dreams" are a numinous invasion of the collective unconscious that overwhelms the Ego. The king is the "I" that trembles in front of the Self.	The experience of mystery always begins with a shaking that shatters the categories. The dream is the *totally Other* that knocks, without name or comprehensible form.
2	**The Merchants of Fear: The**	Brahmins with greedy eyes, sitting in a	Brahmins interpret dreams as a	**The shadow of knowledge.** It is the autonomous	The temptation to *explain* in order to dominate. The

Slide	Title	Scene / visual description	Narrative anecdote (Jātaka 77)	Jungian Reference / Psychological Anecdote	Apophatic dimension
	Shadow Complex	circle, rubbing their hands while calculating the gain. Behind them, the sacrificial pit fills with innocent animals.	threat to the king and prescribe expensive blood sacrifices, driven by greed.	complex that uses spiritual truth for power. He casts the shadow outside (the scapegoat) to avoid looking at his own greed.	Brahmins reduce mystery to a mechanical cause-effect formula: "bad dream = sacrifice". They kill the ineffable by naming it with the label of "danger".
3	**Mediating intuition: the function of the soul**	Queen Mallikā, with a gentle gesture and a look of deep intelligence, whispers in the ear of the anguished king, pointing silently towards the horizon.	Queen Mallikā intuits the falsehood of the Brahmins and directs the king to the Buddha, the true source of wisdom.	**The Soul.** It is the function of relationship that mediates between the I (the king) and the Self (the Buddha). His inner voice overrides the logic of fear to recognize true spiritual authority.	Apophatic intuition is not positive knowledge, but *subtraction*. Mallikā doesn't know what dreams mean, but he knows where *the answer doesn't*. He points to a door, he does not describe it.
4	**Transpersonal deciphering: the dream as a history of the world**	The Buddha, serene and radiant, sits under a tree. In front of him, the king is listening. Behind them, a series of fading scenes show the future decline of civilizations, vanishing bulls, young flowers.	The Buddha interprets the 16 dreams not as personal destinies of the king, but as an impersonal prophecy of the decline of the Dhamma in the distant future. The fear of the king dissolves.	**The archetypal Self and the vision of time.** Jung: Dreams can connect to the "psychoid" layer of reality, where space and time are relative. The dream is not about the shadow of the king, but the shadow of the world.	The explanation is a finger pointing to the moon. The Buddha explains the *what* (the symbolic meaning), but not the *how* (the mystery of trans-temporal vision). The ultimate question – how can the psyche see the future? – is guarded, not violated.
5	**Liberation: beyond sacrifice**	The sacrificial pit is dismantled. The animals are freed from cages. The king, standing, looks at the scene with clear eyes, one hand resting on his heart, the other open in a	Persuaded by the Buddha, the king abolishes bloody sacrifice and saves the lives of multitudes of creatures. His anguish has completely ceased.	**The transcendent function.** The synthesis between unconscious fear (thesis) and the false sacrificial solution (antithesis) is the enlightened interpretation that dissolves the conflict and leads to an act of love. The	The mystery is not "solved", but *crossed*. Contact with the ineffable has transformed action in the world. The teaching ends not with a definition, but with an ethics of compassion that is the fruit of the inner silence achieved.

Slide	Title	Scene / visual description	Narrative anecdote (Jātaka 77)	Jungian Reference / Psychological Anecdote	Apophatic dimension
		gesture of offering.		solution is always on a higher plane of consciousness.	The door has been crossed.

Video: https://youtu.be/9ZpzowO2_go

Conclusion: the apophatic custody of the mystery

The Mahasupina-jataka does not offer a theory of dreams. It does not explain the mechanism of vision, it does not reduce the phenomenon to psychology or elevate it to metaphysics. He guards it.

Sixteen visions cross the king's mind. The Buddha speaks, interprets, reveals the future. But what remains after his word is not a definition, but a silence. Dreams have happened: that's it. What sent them? How can the psyche tear the veil of time? The text does not respond. The explanation of the Awakened One is a finger pointing to the decaying moon of the Dhamma, but the moon itself – the ultimate nature of that seeing – remains elusive, luminous and mute.

This is the apophatic dimension of the story. Brahmins want to possess meaning, to transform it into ritual, into power, into money. The Buddha frees meaning, returns it to the impersonal flow of causes and effects, and in so doing dissolves fear. But at the very moment in which fear dissolves, what emerges is not a new conceptual certainty, but an empty and fertile space: the mystery of a consciousness that sees beyond the boundaries of the ego and time.

There is nothing to believe. There is no dogma to embrace. The king does not become a follower of a new dream doctrine; simply, he stops being afraid. The truth of the dream has not been explained, it has been

traversed. And it is precisely this crossing – this passage from anguish to stillness – that reveals that the dream was not a problem to be solved, but a door to be crossed.

The apophatic dimension emerges powerfully precisely when language recedes. The Buddha spoke at length, listed sixteen interpretations, told a story from the past. Then he is silent. And in that silence, the king knows – not with the discursive mind, but with an inner resonance that needs no words. It is "knowledge without concept": something is silent in the depths and simultaneously resounds familiar, not because it has been identified, but because it has been recognized by a layer of consciousness that precedes thought.

The Jātaka does not conclude with a formula. He concludes with life resuming: the sacrifice annulled, the animals freed, the king returning to his kingdom with a light heart. The mystery is not violated, it is not reduced, it is not tamed. It is guarded in its integrity, like a fire that warms without burning, like a door that remains open but of which no one can tell what lies beyond, except by passing through it.

And perhaps this is precisely the deepest teaching of the Mahāsupina-jātaka: great dreams do not ask to be deciphered, but to be listened to to the end, until they return us to the silence from which they arose. There, in that silence, the name is silent, the dream dissolves and the door appears – not as a concept, but as a passage already present, already open, already ours.

83. Kāḷakaṇṇi-jātaka

– Not the name, but the inner heart makes man.

Scene: A man with an ominous name (Kāḷakaṇṇi = "bad luck") is initially rejected, but his noble soul proves him worthy.

Daily life: Overcoming prejudices and labels; judging by actions and essence.

Jung: The Self beyond the Person; the individuation as the discovery of the true center, ineffable and unlabelable.

1. Plot

In one of his previous lives, the Bodhisatta was born as a merchant named Kāḷakaṇṇi, which literally means "bad luck", "bird of ill omen". Because of this ominous name, no one wants to hire him or deal with him, until a wealthy banker, struck by his composed air, decides to give him a chance, ignoring superstitions. One day, the banker has to collect a debt and sends Kāḷakaṇṇṇi in his place. The young man not only collects with intelligence and honesty, but at a critical moment, when the creditor's house catches fire, he throws himself into the flames and saves the entire family. The heroic act reveals the true nature of his heart, proving that the name has no power over a man's inner reality.

2. Dramatic Structure

- Characters: Kāḷakaṇṇṇi (the Bodhisatta, a young nobleman but with an ominous name), the banker (open mentor, voice of pragmatic wisdom), the crowd/society (bearer of collective prejudice).

- Conflict: The nominal appearance versus the actual substance. The tension between social projection – the name as a stigma – and the intrinsic dignity of the protagonist.

- Turning point: The fire and the rescue. Action emerges from Kāḷakaṇṇi's inner silence: he does not react to prejudice, he acts out of pure compassion. "Bad luck" becomes an instrument of salvation.

- Outcome: The name loses all meaning. The community recognizes its mistake, and Kāḷakaṇṇi is honored not for the label, but for what he has always been: a noble heart. The conflict dissolves into the direct vision of reality.

3. Explicit teaching

"Not the name, but the inner heart makes man." The story openly declares that labels, names and prejudices are empty containers projected by the mind; the only authentic measure is ethical action and purity of intention.

4. Implicit teaching

Beyond the anti-superstitious morality, the Jātaka reveals a more subtle mechanism: "bad luck" is actually a psychological and spiritual function. Kāḷakaṇṇi carries with it the collective shadow – all that society fears and rejects. By integrating it, the banker performs an act of identification ante litteram. Moreover, the fact that the Bodhisatta himself chooses to be born with an ominous name indicates a divine pedagogy: the enlightened one deliberately assumes what the world despises in order to teach the void of designations. The happening of salvation through "ill omen" reveals that reality operates by paradoxes, not by linear logics.

5. Relationship with the Sage and Level III

Jātaka 83 fits perfectly into Level III – Beyond the Veil: Dream, Heart and Apophatic Path. It represents the overcoming of the nominal mask (the Person) to access the ineffable center of the Self. If the dream (Jātaka 77) tears the veils of the nocturnal unconscious, here the "name" is the veil of social wakefulness. The path is apophatic because it proceeds by negations: not the name, not the reputation, not the appearance. The inner heart is not described positively – the text never says what Kāḷakaṇṇi is "in itself" – but it is known only when false identifications are removed. It is a movement that goes beyond language, towards an operating silence.

6. Compelling anecdotes

1. Daily life and prejudice

Label burns before fire

Think of a job interview in which the candidate with a foreign name, a non-conforming appearance or a past marked by errors is discarded a priori. The "inauspicious name" today can be a psychiatric diagnosis, a criminal record, an ethnic origin. The Jātaka suggests that the real misfortune falls on those who refuse: the community loses a savior. In a Jungian key, what we reject in our neighbor is often the unrecognized shadow in us. The banker who hires Kāḷakaṇṇṇi performs a revolutionary act: he stops projecting and opens up to the unexpected.

The image manages to translate the text into a symbolic language much richer than a simple narrative illustration. It doesn't just show a job interview: it stages the invisible mechanism of prejudice and, above all, the moment when it begins to dissolve. In this sense it is perfectly consistent with the title "The label burns before fire", even if it develops it through a symbolism that recalls both Jung and the apophatic dimension of the Kāḷakaṇṇi Jātaka.

The environment is a modern meeting room bathed in soft light. The candidate sits in the center. His posture is surprisingly composed: he does not appear defended or intimidated. The gaze is turned slightly upwards, almost beyond the judgments of the commission. Behind him rises a huge shadow composed of bright flames. It is not a fire. It is a presence. Fire seems to belong to the shadow without consuming it.

In front of him sit the selectors. They are blurry. Their faces are hidden by white masks that they hold in front of their faces.

The transparent label on the chest is now almost destroyed. It explodes into incandescent fragments. It is not simply removed. It is literally disintegrating.

Symbolic analysis

1. The candidate

The protagonist is not represented as a victim. This is important. The text of the Jātaka does not tell the story of a persecuted man. It tells the story of someone who remains identical to themselves while others project meaning onto them. The serene face communicates an inner quality that precedes social judgment. He is already free.

2. The label that breaks

In the text we read: "The inauspicious name today can be a psychiatric diagnosis, a criminal record, an ethnic origin." The image avoids specifying what the label is. It remains transparent. This makes it universal. It can be any stigma. It can be any imposed identity. The fact that it breaks from the inside suggests something even deeper: it is not someone from the outside who frees the protagonist. It is the very falsehood of the label that can no longer sustain itself.

This is a deeply apophatic reading: the name is not replaced with a better name. It simply dissolves.

3. Fire

The title talks about fire. But the fire does not destroy the candidate. Only the symbolic construction burns. In the Kāḷakaṇṇi Jātaka it will be the protagonist who crosses the fire to save the child. Here the fire anticipates that scene. Even before the real fire, there is a symbolic fire: prejudice burns.

4. The recruiters' masks

The commission does not have a face. He has a mask. The Person, in Jung's psychology, is the social role that ends up replacing authentic identity. Here something even more subtle happens. The judges believe they see the candidate. They are actually looking through their own mask. They are the ones who do not see. This translates the sentence perfectly:

"What we reject in our neighbor is often the unrecognized shadow in ourselves."

The candidate is real. The judges are masked. The shadow belongs to them.

5. The Shadow of Fire

The flames almost seem to constitute a second body. They resemble an aura. Or the Jungian Self that emerges behind the Person. The shadow is therefore not negative. It is energy that is still unrecognized.

Connection with the Kāḷakaṇṇi Jātaka

The text states, "The community loses a savior." The protagonist already appears older than the situation. The conversation seems almost too small to contain what he represents. The flames behind him symbolically anticipate the heroic act to come. The viewer intuitively understands that the man has something that the judges do not see. It is exactly the heart of Jātaka. The problem is not Kāḷakaṇṇi. The problem is the gaze of the community.

Jungian reading

The image stages the process of projection. Recruiters believe they are evaluating the candidate. In reality they are meeting their own unconscious. The white masks almost become projection screens. The candidate remains motionless. The agitation belongs to the observers. The fire is born behind the protagonist but also illuminates them. As is often the case in Jungian dreams, what seems threatening is actually the symbol of transformation.

Apophatic dimension

The most surprising aspect is perhaps the least obvious. The image does not celebrate the protagonist. It doesn't build a new hero. It does not replace a negative label with a positive one. Simply let the name disappear. This is precisely the apophatic movement.

It doesn't say:

"This man is good."

Instead, he says:

"Maybe the name you're calling it was never real."

The image thus becomes an invitation to not-knowing. Before getting to know someone, you have to let the name with which we have already classified him burn.

Successful aspects of the image

The calm of the protagonist, who communicates inner strength rather than victimization.

The masks of the selectors, a powerful metaphor for the Jungian Persona and impersonal judgment.

The label that dissolves into luminous fragments, an effective representation of the dissolution of stigma.

The shadow of fire, which symbolically anticipates the next episode of the Jātaka and suggests a potential that is still unseen.

Improved Appearances

The image is already very strong, but some details bring it even closer to the message of the Kāḷakaṇṇi Jātaka:

The shadows of the recruiters are intertwined with that of the candidate, showing that the real "fire" comes from the shared projection and not from the individual judged.

The plaque dissolves into tiny golden grains that turn into small sparks or seeds of light, evoking that a new possibility emerges from the fall of the name instead of emptiness.

Behind the figure of the candidate appears, almost imperceptibly, the silhouette of a child in the flames: not as a narrative element, but as an archetypal anticipation of the savior that the community risks losing.

Some cracks run through the masks of the selectors, suggesting that the real change concerns first and foremost the judge. In this way, the revolutionary act of the Jātaka banker is visualized: to interrupt the projection and let the real manifest itself.

Overall, the images manage to merge three levels of interpretation: the contemporary scene of the job interview, the psychological dynamics of the projection described by Jung and the message of the Kāḷakaṇṇi Jātaka, according to which evil does not reside in the name given to a person, but in the gaze that continues to believe in him. The most decisive fire, therefore, is not the one that flares up in the world: it is the one that consumes our labels even before the facts can speak.

Story

The label that burns

In the fifteenth-floor hall, the glass reflected the city like a distant ember. The selection committee wore white masks — an informal ritual, they said, to judge "the curriculum, not the face." But everyone knew that masks were used to hide their discomfort, not to protect the honesty of judgment.

The candidate's file bore a nickname that someone, laughing nervously, had written in the margin: Kāḷakaṇṇṇi. An ominous name, his colleagues whispered. A story of layoffs, a year of silence, a diagnosis never declared in full. The classic profile that is discarded before even reading the second page.

He sat composed, gray shirt, blue jacket. He didn't seem to perceive the judgment around him — or perhaps he felt it all too well, and for that he burned. A fire that no one in the room saw but me: it climbed from his shoulders, set his hair on fire without consuming it, while on his chest a glass tag — the label itself — cracked, exploding into golden splinters that flew like moths towards the light of the window.

"His profile is not in line with the company culture," said one of those present, adjusting his mask with his finger.

"We can't afford any risks," added another.

I was sitting between them. I was wearing a mask too. I had chosen it myself, that morning, from the drawer where I kept all the faces that were not mine.

Then he looked up—not at them, but upwards, like someone listening to something that comes from far away, from before birth. And in that instant I saw, behind him, not a shadow but a child's figure, enveloped in the same flame, staring straight into my eyes.

It was my face, at six years old. The year in which a relative told me that I would bring bad luck to the family, like others before me. The year I wore my first mask.

The candidate was not burning to be judged. It was burning for me — or rather, with me: it was the part of me that I had kicked off the table thirty years earlier, back knocking under another name, in another file.

The Kāḷakaṇṇṇi of the Jātaka does not bring misfortune: it is brought with it by those who reject it, remaining prisoners of their own projection. What the Buddhist text calls the "ominous name" and what Jung calls the "shadow" are, on closer inspection, the very absence we refuse to name—the apophatic void around which we build labels so that we don't have to look out.

I took off my mask. It was the only vote that counted.

"Hired," I said.

Only later, while the others signed in an embarrassed silence, did I understand why the fire behind him had never touched him: it had been burning since before he entered the room. It had been burning since I had entered my first interview thirty years earlier — on the other side of the table.

2 Jung and the Shadow

What you reject will save you

Kāḷakaṇṇi embodies the figure of the "rejected man", an archetype akin to the unjustly accused faithful servant or scapegoat. Jung would say that society projects its inner "misfortune" onto a scapegoat in order to maintain an illusion of purity. The hero of the Jātaka voluntarily assumes this dark role (detection of the shadow) and, precisely through compassionate action, transforms poison into medicine, showing that the real Self cannot be labeled. It is the encounter with the Shadow that opens the door to the ineffable Self.

The image combines realism and symbolic surrealism.

1. Central Subject: In the center, a stocky, modern-looking man (wearing a denim shirt and dark pants), walks straight toward the viewer through the burning rubble. He has an expression of intense concentration and gently carries a sleeping baby wrapped in a blanket in his arms.

2. The Luminous Shadow: The most striking element is the "projection" behind the man. It is an entity of pure golden light, luminescent and transparent, floating behind it. This golden figure doesn't just follow him; It has multiple arms, clearly visible as they stretch outwards.

3. Environment: The scene is set inside an ancient or ruined rural building, with rough stone walls. It is devastated by fire: open flames and hot coals consume wooden beams and furniture on the ground in the lower half of the image. Thick smoke fills the air.

4. Lighting: Lighting is dual. From below, warm, orange flames provide the main ambient light. From above, a ray of cold, misty light (perhaps moon or divine light) penetrates through a hole in the roof, illuminating the man and his golden projection.

5. Atmosphere: The atmosphere is tense, urgent, but at the same time mysterious and transcendent. Man appears as an unconventional savior.

Analysis in Relation to the Text (Jung and the Shadow)

The image visually translates the Jungian concepts expressed in the text, albeit with a very significant visual inversion.

The Helper and the Child (The Self): Man embodies the hero who takes on the "dark role". He is saving the child, who in the Jungian context may represent the real Self or a lost innocence. His compassionate action (bringing the child out of the flames) is the transformative element mentioned in the text ("he turns poison into medicine").

The Encounter with the Shadow (The Golden Figure): Here the image freely interprets the request for "a shadow not dark but of luminous gold". Visually, it is not the shadow of man, but a distinct entity that springs from him or surrounds him.

Symbolic Reversal: Traditionally, the Shadow is dark. The text confirms this: "The hero of Jātaka voluntarily assumes this dark role." By making the entity "golden", the image does not show the "black" aspect of the shadow, but its transformative potential. Represents the Shadow after integration. The golden figure, with its multiple arms, suggests an archetypal force, perhaps a benevolent deity or the manifestation of the whole Self emerging from the darkness.

The Flames and Chaos (Rejection and Misfortune): The fire and the rubble represent inner and social chaos. The fire symbolizes the fire of "bad luck" that society projects. The hero walks through it, immune, fulfilling his mission.

The Apophatic: The image manages to convey the apophatic dimension. Man's action is mute but powerful ("the act speaks"). The smoky atmosphere and mysterious lighting create a sense of ineffability, of something that cannot be fully labeled or described with words.

Comment and Rating

Strengths:

Visual Impact: The use of golden light against darkness and fire is dramatic and beautiful.

Concept Integration: The integration of the golden figure behind the man, who walks with him, is a brilliant way to show the Shadow as a powerful force, no longer frightening, but integrated.

Emotion: The rescuer's expression and the child's peace create a strong emotional core.

Notable deviations:

Luminous Shadow: The image made the Shadow look like an independent golden entity with many arms, not simply a shadow of the gold-colored man emerging from him. This is a valid creative choice that enhances the concept of transmutation.

Conclusion:

The image perfectly captures the spirit of the text. It shows the hero embracing a dark and risky task (the fire, the archetype of waste) and, precisely in that process of assuming responsibility and compassion, manifests a transcendent force (the golden figure). It is the visual illustration of how "What you reject will save you": by embracing the role of scapegoat and acting with love, the individual rises beyond labels, finding their authentic Self. The image is a success in its ability to evoke the abstract concepts required through its dramatic composition and symbolic light.

Story

The Ash Man

In Sela they still called him Black Ear, the name that the old people gave to those who have bad luck written on them. As a child, a fire had blackened his right lobe; From then on, every misfortune in the village—the rotten harvest, the barren cow, the fever of the children—found its silent cause in him. No one openly accused him. The look was enough, it was enough to leave him out of the parties, it was enough never to call him by his real name.

He did not defend himself. He had learned that protesting made the accusation truer in the eyes of those who wanted it. He lived on the margins, repaired roofs, slept in the barn of the mill, and when someone spat near his feet he lowered his head and kept walking.

On the night of the fire at the depot, he was the first to arrive, not because he was brave but because he was sleepless as always. The flames were already high, the roof was groaning. Inside, according to the cries of a woman, the daughter of the village chief was left — the very man who thirteen years earlier had instigated the rumor about the "boy who carries fire on him".

Black Ear entered. No one had asked him. He walked through a corridor of falling beams, found the little girl under an overturned table, wrapped her in his own jacket, and walked back, not the sight, now useless in the smoke, but the exact memory of every plank on that floor—for he, and no one else, had built that warehouse as a boy, to pay off a debt that no one remembered anymore.

She went out holding the child, the skin of her hands already alive, her hair burned, and the crowd opened in silence, as one opens up in front of something that one does not yet know whether to call a monster or a miracle.

The village chief knelt in front of him, crying, and asked him for forgiveness for thirteen years of suspicion. Black Ear shook his head: "You don't have to forgive me. You have to ask yourself why you needed someone to be guilty."

Then came the surprise, the one that no one — not even he — had foreseen: while the doctors bandaged his hands, an old man of the village, drunk with relief and wine, confessed sobbing that the fire of thirteen years before, the one that had marked the child, had not been a lightning bolt as had always been said. He had set it himself, by mistake, with a lantern left lit. He had let the blame fall on a six-year-old orphan because it was easier than carrying it alone.

Black Ear listened without anger. He understood, in that instant, that the village had never needed a real culprit: it needed a place to lay its shadow, and he, without knowing it, had offered it to him all his life. Now, by bringing the child to safety from the same element that had made him an outcast, he had transformed that place — himself — into something that no label could contain anymore.

He did not apologize to anyone. He only asked for a new name. The village, for the first time, did not know which one to give him.

3 Apophatic dimension

Knowledge without concept

There is no "treatise" on how to recognize the noble heart. The Jātaka does not list the positive qualities of Kāḷakaṇṇṇi; shows them in a flash during the fire. Recognition occurs when the conceptual mind is silent, suspended by the emergency. At that moment, everyone sees – but cannot say – what happened. It is knowledge without a concept: apophases in action.

This image manages to coherently translate the symbolic core of the Kāḷakaṇṇi-jātaka, but above all it makes visible what the story deliberately leaves unspeakable: the moment in which knowledge is born not from a definition, but from direct experience.

The shot is a close-up of a serene face, occupying the right side of the composition. The eyes are half-closed, almost suspended between wakefulness and contemplation. The expression does not convey strong emotions: there is no joy, sadness or triumph, but a radical stillness.

The light is soft and warm, like the reflection of the last embers after a fire that has now been extinguished. It is not the light of victory, but the light that remains when all the superfluous has been consumed.

Fragments of letters and typographic symbols detach from the face and dissolve into the air together with tiny golden particles. The letters no longer form recognizable words: they seem to be the remains of a language that has lost its function.

The large empty space on the left becomes an integral part of the work. It is not a background to be filled, but a real contemplative space.

Symbolic analysis

The image develops three symbolic levels.

1. The face as a place of recognition

In the Jātaka we do not really know who Kāḷakaṇṇṇi is. We only know the name. And that very name is misleading. The face here does not represent a particular individual. It becomes the place where every psychological identity stops. It does not tell a personality. It does not tell a biography. It simply represents a presence. This is extremely close to the logic of the story: it is not the essence that has a name; it is the name that falls before the essence.

2. The dissolving letters

The letters do not remain legible. They shatter. They become bright ashes. If they were still legible, they would retain the power of the concept. Here, however, language implodes. Mental categories lose

consistency. Only the presence remains. In Jungian terms we could say that the Person dissolves. In Buddhist terms, the name falls. In apophatic terms, the domain of definition ends.

3. The vacuum

The empty space takes up almost half of the image. This is not simply "negative space". He is the real protagonist. In the apophatic tradition, emptiness does not indicate absence. Indicates availability. It is the space in which the Mystery can manifest itself without being imprisoned by a description. The image lets the viewer breathe. It does not force the gaze. He invites him.

Connection with Jung

From a Jungian point of view, this image represents a very rare moment. The ego is no longer trying to understand. He is simply observing. When the Person, the Shadow, the social labels, and the projections cease to occupy the center of consciousness, what Jung would call the Self emerges. The Self is not defined. It is recognized. For this reason, the face does not show any psychological tension. It is beyond conflict.

Connection with the Kāḷakaṇṇi-jātaka

Here the connection with the text becomes extremely profound: "There is no treatise on how to recognize the noble heart." The image makes this statement visible. It does not show any list of virtues. It doesn't show a hero. It does not show an award. It only shows what remains when the definitions have worn out. Further: "The Jātaka does not list the positive qualities of Kāḷakaṇṇṇi; shows them in a flash during the fire." The image seems to be placed right after that flash. The fire is no longer present. Only the last embers remain. The action is over. The recognition continues in silence.

The apophatic dimension

Here the image reaches its peak: "Recognition occurs when the conceptual mind is silent, suspended by emergency." The image visualizes exactly that. The letters represent the conceptual mind. Their dissolution represents silence. The face represents the consciousness that remains. We are not witnessing the production of a new theory. We are witnessing the fall of theories. For this reason, the scene communicates an unusual calm. There is nothing to understand. There is only something to see. And this is precisely what happens in the Jātaka. The inhabitants see. They recognize. But they can't really explain what they saw. Their knowledge is born before language. It is knowledge without a concept.

Concluding Comment

This image is not simply the last slide of the carousel: it is its contemplative synthesis. If the previous images tell of the reversal of judgment and the heroic gesture during the fire, here every narrative stops. The fire is now ashes, the words dissolve, the name loses its power and remains only a silent presence.

It is precisely in this subtraction that the image resonates with the apophatic tradition. It does not offer a definition of the "noble heart", because any definition would reduce it to a concept. Like the Kāḷakaṇṇi-jātaka, it suggests that the truest recognition occurs when the urgency of experience suspends judgment and language withdraws. In that instant one does not have an explanation, but an immediate certainty: something essential has been recognized, while remaining unspeakable.

This is why the work manages to transform the paradox of apophasis into an image: it does not show what the noble heart is, but what remains when all labels have ceased to speak. It is silence, not concept, that becomes the place of knowledge.

Story

The word that melts

For twenty-two years Elna Voss had been compiling the Great Dictionary of Human Qualities, a work that no publisher had ever asked for and that she continued anyway, convinced that every virtue had, somewhere, its exact name. The voice he had been working on for the longest time was the simplest and most impossible: nobility of heart. She had collected two hundred and thirty-eight synonyms in forty-one languages, and no one satisfied her.

"Words always come an instant after the thing," her father, also a linguist, told her before he died. "You chase the shadow and call the light a shadow."

Elna had never believed him until the evening of the collapse.

He was passing through the station when a beam of the false ceiling gave way above the tracks, and in an instant the white smoke of the plaster filled the air. She saw—or seemed to see—a figure moving among the people on the ground, lifting an old man from under an overturned bench, leading two children to the exit with a single wave of the arm, without shouting, without instruction. Elna stood by and watched, paralyzed not by fear but by something stranger: for the first time in twenty-two years, no word came to mind. No synonyms. The dictionary, inside her, was silent.

When help arrived, she looked for that figure to thank her, to ask her — as a scholar, she couldn't help it — what she had done was called. But no one could tell her who it was. The witnesses described different gestures, different directions, even different clothes, as if everyone had seen someone and no one had seen the same person.

A paramedic, checking her forehead injured by rubble, said to her gently: "Madam, it was you. We found her standing next to the old man and the kids. Don't you remember?"

Elna did not remember. She didn't remember moving, she didn't remember a thought, a plan, a name to give herself. There had been only smoke, and then silence after, and in the middle a void that no synonym of his two hundred and thirty-eight languages could fill.

He returned home that night and opened the dictionary to the entry nobility of the heart. He did not add a definition. For the first time he left the page blank, and underneath it he wrote only one sentence, which was not a dictionary entry but almost a confession: When it happens, the mind that names is silent — and it is precisely in that silence that it happens.

He closed the book. He never reopened it to complete it. He had found, without looking for it, the only voice that could not be written.

7. Carousel Table – Kāḷakaṇṇi-jātaka with Jungian Integration

Slide	Title	Scene / visual description	Narrative anecdote (Jātaka 83)	Jungian Reference / Psychological Anecdote	Apophatic dimension
1	**The rejected name**	A sunny square. A young man in humble dress but with a noble bearing stands aside while the crowd murmurs and points to signs saying "Bad luck".	Kāḷakaṇṇi is looking for work; everyone chases him away as soon as they hear his name. Only an elderly banker, struck by his serene gaze, welcomed him into his home.	The **Social Person** is the label that the collective sticks. The elderly banker embodies the courage to look beyond the mask, towards the **latent** Self.	The name is denied ("apophasis"): that is not the identity. The silence of the protagonist says more than words: an absence that guards the mystery.
2	**The gesture that reveals**	Flames, smoke. A house in ruins. Kāḷakaṇṇi, without hesitation, throws himself between the collapsing beams, carrying a child and then his mother to safety. The faces around are astonished.	During a fire, Kāḷakaṇṇṇi puts his own life at risk to save the creditor's family. "Bad luck" becomes the only salvation.	**The built-in Shadow** acts. Individuation is not an escape from darkness, but its transformation into service. The heroic gesture flows from the ineffable center, not from an egoic calculation.	The act does not explain, it fulfills. The noble heart manifests itself in the silence of action, without the need for definitions. It is instantaneous, unspeakable revelation.
3	**The center without label**	Close-up of a serene face, illuminated by the now tamed fire. Around, arms outstretched in a gesture of thanks and shame. The word "Kāḷakaṇṇi" dissolves like ashes in the air.	The community asks for forgiveness. The banker smiles: "Not the name, but the inner heart makes the man". Kāḷakaṇṇi remains silent, unperturbed.	The **Self** (Selbst) is beyond definition. The name, like the Person, is a construct. True identity emerges when the psyche is emptied of projections and dwells in its own center, silent and ineffable.	The Jataka does not describe that center: it indicates it by an absence. He is silent about the "inner heart". It is a knowledge without a concept, which resonates only when the labeling mind stops. Apophasis is the real teaching.

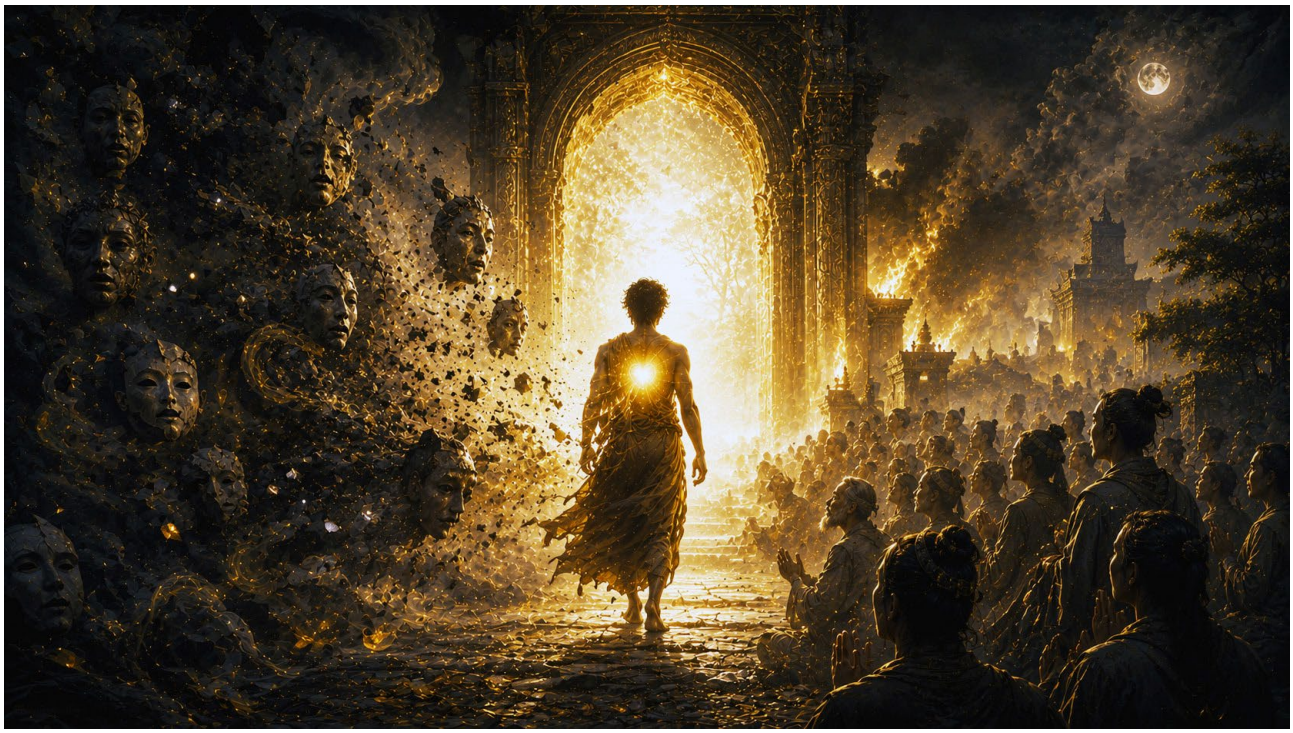
Video: https://youtu.be/bfIo_2a03EE

8. Conclusion: The Apophatic Custody of the Mystery

Jātaka 83 does not really explain the phenomenon: it guards it. The whole narrative is a movement of subtraction: it takes away the name, it takes away the prejudice, it takes away the fear, until only a man remains silent in the flames. In that semantic void, the noble heart appears. It is not defined, it is not conceptualized. It is a sudden manifestation that leaves everyone speechless, because any attempt to describe it would fall into the cage of labels.

The apophatic dimension emerges in the moment in which the mind recognizes the inadequacy of language. The sacred text does not reduce what happened either to a moral lesson (psychology) or to a doctrinal demonstration (metaphysics): it lets it happen in a space of inner silence. Those who listen to the story are invited to experience that silence, where something is silent and resonates simultaneously in the interiority, revealing itself to be "familiar" not because it is understood rationally, but because it has always been known to the depths of the heart.

This Jataka indicates that mystery cannot be reduced to psychology or metaphysics. It remains ineffable: it is a knowledge without a concept. The door to the Self opens only when we stop naming, judging, pretending to know. Then, the man of misfortune turns out to be our savior, and the name dissolves into the only reality that counts: the silent beating of the heart.



84. Atthassadvāra-jātaka

– The paths to spiritual well-being.

Scene: The Buddha lists the gates of goodness: associating with wise people, listening to the Dhamma, reflecting, practicing. But the text suggests that the way is both concrete and transcendent.

Daily life: Cultivating inner conditions for a meaningful life.

Jung: The process of individuation as a "door" to totality, never completely definable.

Apophatic: The doors of well-being (attha) are not objects but openings: negation of any conceptual appropriation. The spiritual end is unspeakable, it is shown only by ways of silence and practice.

No. 84.

ATTHASSADVĀRA-JĀTAKA.

"Seek health." --This story was told by Master while he was in Jetavana, of a boy wise in matters of spiritual well-being. When he was only seven years old, the boy, the son of a very wealthy treasurer, manifested great intelligence and concern for his spiritual well-being; and one day he went to his father to ask what were the Paths that led to spiritual well-being. The father couldn't answer, but he thought to himself, "This is a very difficult question; from the highest heaven to the deepest hell there is no one who can answer, except the omniscient Buddha." So he took the child with him to Jetavana, with a quantity of perfumes, flowers and ointments. Arriving there, he made reverence to the Master, bowed before him and, sitting on one side, spoke to the Blessed One thus: "Sir, this boy of mine, who is intelligent and anxious for his spiritual well-

being, has asked me what are the Ways that lead to spiritual well-being; and not knowing, I have come to you. Guarantee, O Benedict, that this matter will be resolved." "Lay brother," said the Master, "this same question was asked of me by this very child in former times, and I answered it for him. He knew the answer in times past, but now he has forgotten it because of the change of birth." Then, at his father's request, he told this story from the past.

Once, when Brahmadatta reigned at Benares, the Bodhisatta was a very wealthy treasurer; and she had a son who, at only seven years old, showed great intelligence and concern for his spiritual well-being. One day the boy turned to his father to ask about the Paths that led to spiritual well-being. And his father answered him by repeating this verse:

He seeks Health, the supreme good; be virtuous;

Listen to the elders; from the unequal scriptures;

Conforming to the Truth; and they broke the bonds of Allegamento.

Because mainly these six Paths to Wellness lead.

In this sense the Bodhisatta answered his son's question about the Paths that lead to spiritual well-being; And the boy from then on followed those six rules. After a life spent in charity and other good works, the Bodhisatta died to continue living according to his deserts.

At the conclusion of his lesson, the Master identified the Birth by saying, "This child was also the son of those days, and I myself the Treasurer."

Plot

A seven-year-old boy, the son of a wealthy treasurer, manifests an early anxiety about his spiritual well-being and asks his father about the paths that lead to such well-being. The father, not knowing the answer, leads him to the Buddha. The Master explains that the same question had been asked by the child in a previous life, when he himself was the Bodhisatta and had answered with a room. He then tells the story of the past:

the son of the rich treasurer (the Bodhisatta) asks the same question, and the father answers by listing six doors: seeking health (or the highest good), being virtuous, listening to the elders, learning from the scriptures, conforming to the Truth, and breaking the bonds of attachment. The child follows these six rules throughout his life, dedicating himself to good works.

Dramatic Structure

- Characters: the child (protagonist, animated by spiritual thirst), the father (loving but limited figure), the Buddha (omniscient narrator and resolver). In the past life: the son (same child) and the father-Bodhisatta (sage).

- Conflict: The child's radical question – "What are the paths of spiritual well-being?" – reveals a paternal inadequacy and the need for enlightened guidance. The question is so profound that "from the highest heaven to the lowest hell" only a Buddha can answer.

- Turning point: the father leads the child to the Buddha, who reveals the karmic matrix: the question is ancient, the answer already given in a past life. The repetition of the question unites past and present.

- Outcome: the room is pronounced, and the child walks on the six paths. History does not describe a final goal, but fidelity to a way.

Explicit teaching

The text openly declares six "gateways" to spiritual well-being:

1. Seek health (the supreme good, understood as body-mind-spirit integrity).

2. Be virtuous.

3. Listen to the elderly.

4. Learn from the scriptures.

5. Conform to the Truth.

6. Breaking the bonds of attachment.

These six paths are presented as practical and universal guidelines for a liberation-oriented life.

Implicit teaching

- The generative impotence of the question: the inability of the biological father to answer forces one to seek spiritual fatherhood. Spiritual well-being is not inherited by blood but by transmission from an awakened being.

- The cyclical nature of the search: the same question is reborn with the child, suggesting that the tension for truth is a virtuous karma, an imprint that runs through existences.

- Practice as an answer: the list is not a theory to be contemplated, but a sequence of actions. The goal is not a concept, but a step to be taken.

- The absence of a described goal: the six gates are not well-being itself, but paths. The implicit teaching is that the spiritual end remains unspeakable; it manifests itself in the crossing, not in the definition.

Relationship with the Sage and Level III

The essay "Beyond the Name, the Dream, and the Door: Asceticism of the Heart in Jātaka 73–84" places this account as the culmination of a three-stage journey: the overcoming of the name (Jātaka 73), the dream as the revelation of the heart (Jātaka 74), and finally the "door" as the apophatic path. Level III – Beyond the Veil: Dream, Heart and Apophatic Path – turns the gaze inside and beyond all forms. The Atthassadvāra-jātaka closes the trilogy precisely because it transforms the search into a series of openings that cannot be possessed: six movements of the soul that belie any conceptual appropriation. Just as dreams reveal what the name hides, here the "doors" of well-being are not objects but thresholds. The text does not explain what spiritual well-being is, but how it is accessed, protecting its ineffability.

Compelling anecdotes: everyday life, Jung and the apophatic dimension

1. The door that isn't there, yet it opens

The Nameless Door

Imagine a person desperately trying to "change their life": reading manuals, attending courses, setting goals. One day, exhausted, she stops looking and simply starts walking every morning at dawn, aimlessly. In that gratuitous gesture she finds a peace that no method had given her. He has walked through the door of health and non-attachment without knowing it. It is the apophatic: well-being appears when you stop defining it.

The image "The Nameless Door" visually translates the paradox expressed in the text: the threshold that opens only when you stop looking for it.

The landscape is immersed in a golden and violet fog, where the boundary between earth and sky dissolves. The solitary figure, faceless, advances towards a door of light that is not built but revealed — a passage that arises from silence. Abandoned objects (book, map, rope) are symbols of the renunciation of methods and structures: knowledge, planning, control. Everything that was needed to "change life" is now useless.

Symbolic analysis

- The anonymous figure represents the universality of spiritual experience: anyone can cross the threshold of non-attachment.

- The door of light is the apophatic image par excellence: it is not something to be achieved, but what manifests itself when the desire to reach vanishes.

- The journey at dawn evokes the birth of a new consciousness, not by conquest but by surrender.

- The absence of face and name dissolves the ego, leaving only the walking presence.

Philosophical Commentary

The work embodies the logic of the "not-knowing that knows": Jung would perhaps have read in this scene the moment in which the unconscious opens spontaneously, without the mediation of the Ego. It is the door of health that opens not by will, but by abandonment. The apophatic, in visual terms, is rendered by the luminous void: light does not describe, but erases the contours.

Poetic synthesis

The figure does not enter a place, but a condition. The door does not lead elsewhere: it is the world itself which, ceasing to be sought, reveals itself as a threshold.

In this sense, the image is a meditation on the gratuitous gesture — walking aimlessly — as a form of healing.

Epigraph – The door that is not there, yet it opens

Walking aimlessly,

until the step becomes breath.

The books, the maps, the ropes —

everything he wanted to drive

melts into the light.

There's no door to open,

yet the threshold is revealed

when the search is silent.

The dawn promises nothing,

but those who surrender to his silence

crosses every border.

Story

The Nameless Door

Mirco had read all the manuals. She had taken courses in mindfulness, transcendental meditation, biohacking, intermittent fasting. He had a notebook full of weekly goals and an app that counted his steps to "the best version of himself." Yet every night he fell asleep with the same feeling: that he was always one step behind the door that everyone seemed to have found.

One morning in November, exhausted more from looking than from living, Mirco stopped. He didn't decide to quit—he just stopped, like you stop holding your breath. He left the house before dawn, without running shoes, without a motivational playlist, without a destination. He brought with him, out of habit rather than purpose, an old philosophy book that was never finished, a rolled up map of a path he had never traveled, and a rope kept in the garage for years, he didn't know what for.

He walked in the fog of the field behind the house. The wet grass soaked his pants. He thought of nothing—or rather, the thoughts came and went like the fog itself, without him holding them back.

It was then that he saw it: a vertical, clear light, like a crack in the fabric of the morning. A door, tall and narrow, which did not rest on any wall, did not belong to any house. It stood there, in the middle of the field, and it burned with a golden light that did not hurt the eyes.

Mirco's heart began to beat fast. There, he thought. Here is the door I have been looking for for years. It was enough to stop looking for it.

He put the book down — he didn't need to read anymore to understand. He put down the map — he no longer needed a path traced by others. He put down the rope—he didn't need anything to hold onto, neither to hoist himself up, nor to tie himself, nor to keep from falling.

He approached empty-handed. He already felt, in advance, the euphoria of the threshold: finally everything would change.

He crossed the light.

And nothing happened.

No revelations, no new worlds, no voices. Only the field that continued on the other side, the same grass, the same fading fog, the sun that really rose, trivially, behind the hills. The "door" had never been a door: it was the exact spot where the light of the rising sun, filtered through a gash in the fog, drew a rectangular shape for an instant — an optical illusion destined to vanish within a minute.

Mirco stopped, confused, almost disappointed. He turned to retrace his steps, to look at least for the book, the map, the rope—the objects left as an offering at a gap that did not exist.

But he didn't find them where he thought he had left them. He found nothing. He looked at the field, the melting fog, the ordinary light of an ordinary morning. And then, without really knowing why, he began to laugh.

The surprise was not the door. It had never been the door. The surprise was that, in order to cross it, he had to stop carrying everything he thought he needed to cross it. And once on the other side — which was the exact same field as before — he realized that real change was no other place to go. It was precisely that morning, that gratuitous gesture, that aimless walk that had already, silently, dissolved the weight carried for years.

There was no door. But something, in him, had nevertheless opened up.

2. Jung and the process of individuation as a "door" that can never be defined

The path that is created by walking

For Jung, individuation is the path to the totality of the Self, an opus that cannot be described in advance because it is unique to each one. Like the six gates of the Jātaka, individuation offers coordinates (integration of shadow, dialogue with the unconscious, confrontation with archetypes) but does not guarantee a map. Jung writes that "the Self is an unknown magnitude, a conceptual limit". The doors of spiritual well-being work in the same way: they invite you to cross, but the goal is a mysterium coniunctionis that is revealed only by living.

The image translates with remarkable effectiveness the symbolic heart of the Atthassadvāra-jātaka read through Jung's analytical psychology. It does not simply represent a wayfarer climbing a mountain, but stages one of the deepest intuitions shared by Jātaka and Jungian work: the way is not an object to be known, but an experience that manifests itself only while it is traveled.

The scene is dominated by a mountain landscape immersed in darkness. The mountains, jagged and almost devoid of details, seem to emerge from the unconscious rather than belonging to a real geography. The deep blue tones evoke the night of the soul, the space of the unknown, of the still unexplored psyche.

From the first floor a golden, sinuous, luminous path arises, which crosses the rocks like a thread of light. It is not a constructed road: it seems rather to emerge from the ground itself. Its serpentine movement suggests that the direction is not linear but made up of turns, returns, continuous transformations.

A solitary human figure appears in the lower center. It is deliberately small compared to the landscape, almost anonymous. She does not possess heroic attributes or elements that make her identifiable: she could be anyone. The wayfarer is absorbed by the journey, not by the destination.

The path leads to an upper region immersed in cosmic fog. There emerges a luminous, delicate, almost transparent mandala, suspended between stars and vapors. The mandala does not dominate the scene; it remains distant, blurred, barely intuitive.

The entire composition leaves a large opening at the top, creating a space of silence that amplifies the sense of mystery.

Symbolic analysis

The path that starts while walking

The most significant element is the path. Normally a path already exists and the wayfarer walks it. Here, however, light seems to accompany the journey, suggesting that the road does not precede man: it is born together with his progress. It is a perfect representation of the Jungian individuation process. Jung continually emphasizes that individuation is not a standardized method. There is no one-size-fits-all itinerary. Each individual builds his or her relationship with the Self through the unrepeatable experiences of his or her life. The image visualizes this idea without resorting to didactic symbols.

The absence of fingerprints

The wayfarer leaves no footprints. It is a very powerful symbol. Every authentic spiritual process does not create a pattern to imitate. The path does not become a paved road for those who come after. Each human being will have to generate his or her own path again. This is exactly what happens in Atthassadvara-jataka. The six doors do not prescribe a definitive technique. They open up possibilities.

The distant mandala

For Jung, the mandala is one of the privileged symbols of the Self. However, he insists that the Self cannot be identified with any particular image. It is always greater than representation. The image fully respects this intuition. The mandala is not placed in the center. It is not reached. It's not sharp. It is barely perceptible. This visual distance corresponds perfectly to the Jungian statement that "The Self is an unknown magnitude, a conceptual limit." The image thus avoids a very frequent error in spiritual iconography: transforming the Self into a possessable object. Here the Self remains a mystery.

The mountain of the unconscious

Mountains are not so much obstacles as levels of the psyche. They are dark, ancient, silent masses. Their verticality recalls the long work of integrating the Shadow, the archetypes and the unconscious parts of the personality. The wayfarer does not fight against them. He crosses them.

Link to the discovery process

The text states:

"Individuation is the path to the totality of the Self, an opus that cannot be described in advance."

The image accurately translates this idea.

Does not show:

a goal achieved;

a definitive revelation;

A final prize.

Instead, it shows the process. This is profoundly Jungian. Individuation does not consist in arriving. It consists in progressively becoming what one is called to be. The light of the path suggests that each step illuminates only the next. Never the entire route.

Connection with the Atthassadvara-jātaka

The six gates of the Jātaka possess the same symbolic structure.

They indicate:

health;

virtue;

listening to the essays;

study of the Dhamma;

discernment;

spiritual friendship.

However, the story does not promise that, by going through them, the result will be predictable. Doors are not a machine that produces lighting. They are guidelines.

Just as Jung talks about:

integration of the Shadow;

dialogue with the unconscious;

comparison with archetypes.

These elements constitute coordinates. Not a map. The image visualizes this analogy with great consistency. The path exists. The direction exists. But the destination remains immersed in fog.

Apophatic dimension

From an apophatic point of view, this is probably the most successful image quality. It does not reveal the mystery. He guards it. The mandala remains veiled. The fog is not dissipated. The stars do not completely light up the sky. The path is not perfectly defined either. Everything suggests that truth is not an object to be observed but an event to be experienced. This is precisely the logic of apophasis. Don't eliminate the mystery. Make it habitable.

The image deliberately renounces the spectacularity of the "final goal" and instead chooses the suspension, the unfinished, the already-and-not-yet. In this sense it becomes a visual meditation on the mysterium coniunctionis: the union of opposites is not shown as a definitive point of arrival, but as a horizon that continues to attract the wayfarer without ever letting himself be exhausted.

Overall Rating

The image manages to merge three different symbolic registers into a single composition:

the Jātaka, with its "doors" that orient without determining;

Jung, with the process of individuation as an unrepeatable path towards a Self that remains an "unknown greatness";

the apophatic dimension, which preserves the mystery instead of dissolving it into a definition.

Image edited:

1) The path is generated at the very moment of the step, the light is born directly under the feet of the traveler, while behind him the path dissolves into the rock or sand, so as to visualize with greater force the idea that the way does not pre-exist the pilgrim.
2) A second refinement accentuates the ineffable character of the mandala, emerging and vanishing in the cosmic fog with incomplete contours, the Self really appears as a "conceptual limit": a real presence, orienting, but never fully graspable.
3) The image embodies even more deeply the intuition shared by Jung and the Atthassadvāra-jātaka: we do not possess the door of awakening; we can only continue to cross it, step by step, letting the path itself reveal what no map could anticipate.

Story

The Walking Door

Marco had started to mark the path in a notebook.

Every night, in his half-sleep, he found himself on the same mountain: black rocks, blue fog, and a path of liquid gold that climbed up to a mandala of light suspended between the stars. He walked towards it as if it were the answer to something he could not even formulate during the day. When he woke up, he drew the curves of the route, convinced that if only he found the exact map — the right sequence of turns, the shadow to cross at the right time, the archetype to recognize at turn number seven — he would arrive once and for all at the door and open it.

He had read Jung obsessively. The Self is an unknown magnitude, a conceptual limit, he repeated to himself, and then ignored the sentence, continuing to search for the exactitude that that same sentence denied him. He had also read ancient Buddhist tales, of the six doors that open onto a man lost in the forest: one promises wealth, one promises power, one promises escape — and none is the true one, because the true door has no sign.

Yet every night the path changed shape slightly. One night it was steeper. Another forked and he chose at random. The notebook was filled with maps that never overlapped, and this exasperated him: how could he identify himself, become whole, if the path did not allow itself to be fixed?

His wife, in the morning, found him absent, the cold cup of coffee next to the notebook full of golden lines drawn in pencil. "That dream again?" he asked. He nodded, distracted, already imagining the next night.

Until one night he reached the top, where the path narrowed in a last bend before the mandala. The light was so intense that it looked like matter. He stretched out his hand towards the center of the luminous design, certain that behind it there was a revelation, a gap on another order of reality.

The mandala opened like an eye.

Inside there was no emptiness, no divinity, no definitive map. There was his bedroom, seen from above: himself asleep, his wife next to him, the alarm clock that marked 6:12, yesterday's cup of coffee still on the bedside table, unwashed. The notebook of maps, open on his lap, as he was at that moment in the dream.

He understood, with a shiver that was not fear, that the path led nowhere else. Each night he simply drawn, in other words, the imprecise and changing shape of his waking life—the choices made at random, the forks he didn't decide, the absence his wife noticed every morning. The mountain was not a stage towards the Self. It was the mirror, deformed by sleep, of not having yet come down to breakfast with her.

The real door, he realized too late and just in time, had no sign or mandala. It was the kitchen one, which he had never crossed before nine.

He woke up. It was 6:13 a.m. He closed the map book, for the first time without drawing anything, and went to breakfast with her.

3. The shadow of the father and the inner guidance

The door is me

The child's father does not know how to answer: he is an image of the insufficiency of external authority. Jung would have seen in this the failure of the "character" (the social mask) and the need to turn to the Self. The Buddha, who recognizes the child as "the same" as in a past life, is the archetype of the Old Sage, the voice of the totality that already knows the answer. The Jungian anecdote: a patient dreams of knocking on a door, but there is no one on the other side; then she realizes that the door is herself. The doors of well-being are structures of the psyche, not physical places.

The image manages to condense the symbolic core of the Jungian anecdote with considerable effectiveness and, at the same time, to open a profound dialogue with the Atthassadvāra-jātaka. It does not simply represent a woman in front of a door: it stages the moment in which the search changes direction. The question is no longer addressed to the world, but to the very being of the seeker.

The composition is built around two poles.

On the right dominates a massive wooden door inserted in an ancient stone wall. The woman gently rests her hand and face on it, almost listening to her breathing. A golden light emerges from the wood which, with extreme finesse, draws the profile of a human face. It is not a separate face: it is both the grain of the wood and the reflection of the woman herself.

On the left, immersed in a silent and foggy forest, a male figure slowly moves away. The father does not look back; its presence is now tenuous, almost dissolved in the vegetation.

The entire scene is enveloped in cold tones – green, grey and muted blue – from which a single source of heat emerges: the light coming from the door. Everything converges towards that bright spot.

Symbolic analysis

The image is constructed as a progressive inversion of the gaze. At first it seems to tell a familiar scene:

a person is looking for an answer;

a door should open;

someone should answer.

But if you look closely, you understand that there is no "inside" and no "outside". Light does not filter through the door. It comes from the door itself. And this is where the symbol becomes extremely refined. The door does not represent a passage to another place. It represents a transformation of identity. The woman will not enter the door. It will become the door.

The figure of the father

One of the most successful aspects is the discreet presence of the male figure. It does not appear threatening. It doesn't even appear tragic. It's just disappearing. This detail is fundamental. The text that accompanies the anecdote states that:

"The child's father doesn't know how to answer."

The image translates this sentence without literally illustrating it. The father is not defeated. He is not judged. He is not humiliated. It simply becomes no longer necessary. It is a very Jungian psychological passage. External authority is not false. It is incomplete. It is useful up to a certain point along the way. Then it must leave room for something deeper.

Jungian reading

Here Jung's thought emerges strongly. For Jung, the father initially represents:

the law;

safety;

the knowledge received;

authority;

the Person, that is, the identity constructed through social recognition.

When this structure is no longer sufficient, the psyche produces compensatory images. The woman who knocks on the door is the I. Silence on the other hand represents the failure of outward expectations. The decisive intuition comes when it includes:

The door is me.

The image beautifully visualizes this moment. The glowing face in the wood is not a ghost. It is the Self that emerges from the matter of everyday life.

The Invisible Old Sage

In the Jātaka the Buddha appears. Here, surprisingly, the Buddha is not depicted. And it is precisely this absence that makes its symbolic presence stronger. Light fulfills the archetypal function of the Old Sage. He does not appear as a person. It appears as consciousness. As recognition. How to know silent. The image therefore avoids transforming the Buddha into a narrative character. He lets it become an inner principle. This choice is perfectly consistent with apophatic language.

Connection with the Atthassadvara-jātaka

In the Jātaka the child asks what the "gates of well-being" are. Adults do not know how to answer. Only the Buddha immediately recognizes the real level of the question. The answer is not to name six places. It consists of showing six inner transformations. The image translates this insight into an even more radical metaphor. The door is not a building. It is not an architectural threshold. It is the very structure of consciousness. Each "door" of the Jātaka becomes a quality of the psyche. For this reason, wood slowly takes on the features of the human face.

The apophatic dimension

Perhaps the most fascinating aspect of the image is what it does not show. It doesn't show what's beyond the door. It does not show the "spirit world." It does not show the Buddha. It doesn't show heaven. It doesn't show any spectacular revelations. The mystery remains guarded. This is precisely the language of apophasis. The answer is not to add images. It consists in progressively removing the illusion that the truth lies

elsewhere. Light does not come from beyond. It comes from the point where the seeker stops separating from the threshold.

Psychology of transformation

From a psychological point of view, the image describes a process of individuation. Four movements can be distinguished:

1. External search – knock on the door.

2. Frustration – no one responds.

3. Disidentification – the father walks away.

4. Integration – the face emerges from the door.

It is a sequence extraordinarily close to the path of individuation described by Jung.

Image enhancements

The fusion is more complete: part of the woman's body dissolves into the grain of the wood, so that it is not only the face that identifies with the door, but the whole person, making it visible that the threshold is not something that is crossed, but something that is become.

The grain of the wood suggests, almost imperceptibly, six thin rays or lines converging towards the woman's heart, symbolically recalling the six doors of well-being without transforming them into explicit elements.

The shadow of the father progressively dissolves into fog, suggesting that external authority is not denied or destroyed, but reabsorbed into the psychic nature from which it emerged.

The light is born not only from the door, but also from the woman's chest, to the point of making it indistinguishable which of the two is the source. In this way the apophatic paradox becomes fully visible: the door illuminates the woman and, simultaneously, the woman illuminates the door.

Conclusion

The image does not simply illustrate an episode or a dream: it stages a conversion of the gaze. The Atthassadvāra-jātaka teaches that the "gates of well-being" are not places to be reached but inner dispositions to be embodied. Jung expresses the same intuition through the dream of the patient who discovers that she herself is the door. The composition blends these two languages into a single visual metaphor: the father, symbol of external authority, moves away without being defeated; the Buddha does not appear as a figure, but as the light of consciousness; and the door ceases to be an object to reveal itself as the most authentic face of the person. The true threshold does not lead elsewhere: it coincides with the moment in which the seeker recognizes that what he was looking for is already the deepest structure of his psyche. In this perspective, the phrase "I am the door" is not a simple psychological intuition, but becomes the contemporary translation of the teaching of the Jātaka: well-being does not wait beyond a threshold, because the threshold is already the Self that finally allows itself to be recognized.

Story

The door is me

As a child, Elena always had the same dream: an old wooden door, set in an ivy-covered stone arch, at the end of a path in the woods. He knocked, and no one answered. In the morning he asked his father who was behind that door. He lowered his gaze, shrugged his shoulders, and did not know how to answer. Then he turned and walked away down the corridor, like someone fleeing from a question too big for his own voice.

Elena grew up carrying that question inside like a splinter. He studied, married, divorced, buried a parent, lost another in the slow fog of memory that fades away. And the dream returned, always the same, always at that door.

One autumn he went to see a Jungian analyst, for a pain that had no precise name — not mourning, not anxiety, something older, like a closed door in a room that is believed to be empty. He told the dream. The woman listened for a long time, then said something that Elena never forgot: "Maybe your father didn't know how to answer you because that wasn't a question for him. External authority, the parent, the teacher, the priest: at some point everyone fails, not through fault, but because the door is not outside us. It's inside."

Elena thought of the story the analyst had read to her that evening, an ancient Buddhist story: A child asks the Buddha who he was in a previous life, and the Buddha responds by recognizing him as "the same"—not a different soul, but the same stream flowing in changing forms. The Old Sage does not teach a new answer: he reveals that the question and the one who asks it are the same water.

That night Elena dreamed again of the path, the fog, the twisted trees. But this time, as she walked to the door, she noticed that in front of her, on the path, walked a man in a long coat, hunched shoulders, slow steps—her father, she thought, walking away for the umpteenth time without an answer.

He ran to the door. The wood burned with a golden light, and in the grain of the trunk he glimpsed a face, sculpted by time or by the light itself: closed eyes, serene features, almost in prayer. He placed his palm on the warm wood. He felt his heart beating against the planks as if his chest had no boundary.

It was then that the face in the wood opened his eyes.

It was not the face of his father. He was not a god, nor a ghost. It was her face, aged by years that she had not yet lived, that looked at her from inside the door with the same expression of recollection that she had at that moment.

He understood, with a shudder, that it was not fear: the door hid no one to meet. She was the door. Not a layer, not a mask to be removed to find something behind it — the whole structure, the hinges, the wood, the threshold, was made of its own substance.

She turned to look for the man in the coat, to finally tell him that she had understood, that he no longer had to answer. But the path was empty. It was never his father who walked away.

It was she herself, from behind, who walked away — the Elena of every morning who remained to ask, who finally left the question behind to enter into the answer.

He woke up no longer knowing, with certainty, which of the two had knocked: the woman at the door, or the woman walking away into the woods. But for the first time in thirty years, he didn't feel the need to find out.

Carousel table. 84. Atthassadvāra-jātaka with Jungian integration

Slide	Title	Scene / visual description	Narrative anecdote (Jātaka 84)	Jungian reference / Psychological anecdote and apophatic dimension
1	**The impossible question**	A child with an intense gaze, in front of his silent father, in a room lit by oil.	A seven-year-old boy asks his father, "What are the paths to spiritual well-being?" The father is silent and leads him to the Buddha.	The child represents the nascent Self questioning the Ego. The impotence of the father is the collapse of the *person*. Apophatic: the question has no conceptual answer.
2	**The Six Doors**	Six portals of light in a nocturnal landscape; Each one carries a symbol: a heart, a book, an ear, a flame, a broken chain, a healthy body.	The Bodhisatta, in a past life, responds to his son with the room of the six ways: health, virtue, listening, scriptures, truth, detachment.	Doors are archetypes of transformative action. Jung: Totality is achieved by integrating functions (thought, feeling, sensation, intuition) into an ineffable center.
3	**Health as integrity**	A figure walks in balance on a wire between heaven and earth, breathing light.	"Seek health, the highest good." Not only the absence of disease, but the entirety of body-soul-spirit.	Jungian health is the conscious relationship with the Self, a dynamic unity of opposites. Apophatic: true health is not flaunted, it is a non-obstacle.
4	**Listening and writing**	An old man whispers to a young man; The wind carries syllables to an open book between the roots of a tree.	"Listen to the elders; from the scriptures learned." Tradition and study as nourishment.	Listening to the dream, to synchronicities, to the body. The elderly is the archetype of the Senex. Apophatic: the truth is heard in the silence between words.

Slide	Title	Scene / visual description	Narrative anecdote (Jātaka 84)	Jungian reference / Psychological anecdote and apophatic dimension
5	**Conforming to the Truth and Breaking Ties**	Hands untying knots of golden rope; behind, a figure is reflected in a motionless lake without rippling it.	"Conform yourselves to the Truth; break the bonds of attachment." Adherence to reality and liberation.	Surrender to the Self, not to the I. Jung: "It is not the "I" that is realized, but the Self that realizes the "I." Apophatic: Truth is not a content but an absence of friction.
6	**The door is crossing**	A door without jambs, suspended in the void; those who cross it are no longer seen, only space remains.	The child follows the six paths throughout his life; History does not say where it ends.	The discovery process is endless. The apophatic guards the mystery: spiritual well-being is "passing through" without being able to define it.

Video: https://youtu.be/axrsvhXVxUg

Conclusion: the apophatic dimension

The Atthassadvara-jātaka never explains what spiritual well-being is. He lists six paths which, by their practical and plural nature, prevent any reduction of the end to an idea. The apophatic dimension emerges strongly precisely in this subtraction: the "doors" deny any conceptual appropriation of the sacred. They are not

objects of knowledge but openings; they do not lead to a place but to a way of being that manifests itself only in the crossing.

The Jātaka guards the mystery like a shell that protects the seed. The repetition of the question through the lives shows that the answer is never definitively possessed: it is re-incarnated as a question because awakening is not a given, but an ever-new event. In Jungian terms, it is the Self that draws the Ego towards a totality that can never be fully described. The apophatic, here, is the silence that remains after the room, the sudden familiarity that does not derive from an explanation but from an inner resonance. The child "knew the answer in days past" but forgot it because of the change of birth: spiritual knowledge is a memory without a concept, an echo that is silent and at the same time calls. To pass through the door is to recognize that the goal is already, mysteriously, present in the beginning.

Overall Conclusion

We started with a gesture. The word given, the trees that resist together in the forest, a fish that invokes rain, an ascetic who fearlessly observes the slow unraveling of the senses. Twelve Jātakas, twelve minimal stories that the Buddhist Canon has handed down to us as seeds of awakening. And we questioned them with three perspectives: the ethical one, which weaves the world through actions; the Jungian one, which descends into the shadows to bring to light what lives there without a name; and the apophatic one, which is silent when the word has completed its task.

The path unfolded in three movements, like an asceticism that does not rise but digs.

Level I – The ethical foundation: gestures that weave the world. The first four Jatakas (73–76) showed us that the spiritual path does not begin with enlightenment, but with fidelity to what is near. To tell the truth even when it costs (Saccaṃkira), to recognize that salvation is common and not solitary (Rukkhadhamma), to transform fear into active prayer (Maccha), to stand firm while everything trembles (Asaṃkiya). They are gestures that weave the fabric of the world, an ethics that does not need commandments because it flows from the naked presence of life.

Level II – The Shadow and its Double: Unmasking the Masks of Vice. With Jātaka 79–82 and 78 we encountered deceit, boasting, dependence, insatiable greed and devouring avarice. Kharassara, Bhīmasena, Surāpāna, Mittavinda, Illīsa: five stories in which vice is never a simple mistake, but a mask of a denied inner truth. The Jungian shadow has become the protagonist: the enemy is not outside, he inhabits the psyche. Recognizing it without fleeing is already transformation. The shame of the unmasked thief, the blush of the boastful, the cliff of the Mittavinda-jātaka that plunges into the abyss of bottomless desire: every fall is an appeal to totality.

Level III – Beyond the Veil: Dream, Heart and Apophatic Path. The last three Jātakas (77, 83, 84) have turned their gaze upside down. Here the word becomes a dream (Mahāsupina), the name yields to the heart (Kāḷakaṇṇi), and the paths of well-being become doors that are not described, only crossed (Atthassadvāra). We have entered the apophatic dimension, where language stops and preserves the mystery rather than violating it. The sixteen dreams of King Pasenadi are not enigmas to be solved, but visions that speak to the soul even before the mind. The name Kāḷakaṇṇi, "bad luck", turns out to be empty, a shell that does not touch the sanctity of the wearer. And the six gates of spiritual well-being do not lead to a place, but to a way of being that manifests itself only in crossing.

These three levels are not hierarchical. They are stratified like the soil of interiority: ethics is the surface on which we rest our feet, the shadow is the layer we must move, and apophatic silence is the depth that cannot

be dug to the end. Jung would have said that individuation is never completed, because the Self is a limiting quantity, a horizon that recedes as we advance. The Jātakas have always known this: their stories do not end, they open. The child of the Atthassadvāra-jātaka follows the six rules throughout his life, but the text does not tell us where he arrives. It only tells us that the question is reborn, life after life, because awakening is not a given but an ever-new event.

We have called this path "asceticism of the heart". Not an asceticism of renunciation or mortification, but of refinement. The heart, in the Buddhist tradition and in Jungian psychology, is not sentimentality but the integrating center, the organ of totality. The Jātakas educate the heart to see without appropriating, to feel without holding back, to name without exhaustion. They tell, and in telling they open gaps.

The apophatic dimension has been our silent compass. We have not tried to explain the Jātakas in depth, because explaining everything is another form of possession. Instead, we tried to preserve its mystery, to remain on the threshold. Each Jātaka is a door: not a wall that bars, but an opening that invites. The apophatic is this: not to say what the sacred is, but to protect the space so that the sacred can happen. It is silence after the Buddha's room. It is the echo of the child's question that resonates through existences. It is knowledge without concept that we recognize when something, inside, is silent and at the same time responds.

This essay was also an experiment in multimedia translation. Each Jātaka has become an animated video, a table for a carousel, a post for different platforms. Not to disperse, but to multiply the thresholds. Because today the doors of spiritual well-being also pass through YouTube, LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook and blogs. The form changes, the question remains that of the seven-year-old child: "What are the paths that lead to the highest good?"

And the answer – we have learned it – is not a theory to be grasped. It is a step. Then another. To the point of recognizing that the goal is already, mysteriously, present in the beginning.

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